

CONFIDENTIAL.

(9307.)

PART XIV.

FURTHER CORRESPONDENCE

RESPECTING THE

AFFAIRS OF PERSIA.

April to June 1908.

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307	Mr. Marling	.. 147 Tel.	20,	Political situation. Refers to No. 303. Shah unlikely to give satisfactory reply as to adherence to Constitution. Support for Parliament from Tabreez and Ispahan. The Enjumens and bazaars	215
308	To Mr. O'Beirne	.. 172 Tel.	20,	Anglo-Russian action at Tehran. Refers to Nos. 290 and 296. Ready to give warning to Zil-es-Sultan and also to Shah. Silence may be interpreted both as favouring the Zil and also as hostility to Constitution ..	216
309	M. Isvolsky to Count Benckendorff (communicated by Count Benckendorff, June 21)	Telegraphic	19,	Turco-Persian frontier. Comments on information from M. de Hartwig and views of Mr. Marling and Mr. O'Beirne. Urges pressure on the Porte, who are undoubtedly implicated in Kurds' activity	216

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311	Mr. G. Barclay	.. 340	14,	Turco-Persian frontier. Transmits note from Persian colleague asking to be furnished with copies of notes exchanged in 1847 and 1848 which are not in Embassy archives	217
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314	Mr. G. Barclay	.. 150 Tel.	22,	Turco-Persian frontier. Transmits telegram (No. 40 of 18th June) from Urumia. States which Kurds were responsible for raiding Ardishai, &c. Details of raid on post of Urumia connived at if not instigated by Turks	219
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316	Mr. Marling	.. 149 Tel.	22,	Russian Minister's audience of Shah. Refers to No. 310. Describes. Question of joint warning to Zil. Reactionary Ministry probable	220
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321	To Mr. Marling	.. 102	22,	Steam-ship "Shushan." Refers to No. 247. Approve action. Unnecessary to take further steps at present	222
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324	Mr. G. Barclay ..	151 Tel.	23,	Turco-Persian frontier. Transmits telegram (No. 39 of 17th June) from Urumia. Kurdish outrages continue. Turkish flying column to go through southern district. Ineffective endeavour of Persian Commissioner to extract statement of claims from Tahir	223
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326	Mr. Marling ..	150 Tel.	23,	Fighting at mosque adjoining Assembly. Describes beginning of. Still proceeding	224
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328	To Mr. O'Beirne ..	177 Tel.	23,	Joint representations at Tehran. To inform Minister for Foreign Affairs of concurrence as to publication of communications in same way as last Christmas, and express satisfaction	224
329	To Mr. Marling ..	121 Tel.	23,	Joint representations. Refers to Nos. 315 and 308. To act in concert with Russian colleague	224
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334	To India Office	24,	Red Oxide Concession on Hormuz Island. Refers to No. 133. Transmits No. 301. Proposes to answer that His Majesty's Legation will still support Messrs. Ellinger so long as enterprise remains British	232
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338	Mr. O'Beirne ..	102 Tel.	25,	Bastis at British Legation. M. Isvolsky deplores their admittance. Has explained our position	234
339	Mr. Marling ..	154 Tel.	25,	Fighting in Tehran. Refers to No. 332. Gives further details. Looting and arrests. Fifty refugees in Legation. Complete mastery of Shah. Fighting at Tabreez	234
340	" ..	155 Tel.	25	Refugees at Legation. Refers to No. 339. Reports interview with Secretary of Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Visit to Minister for Foreign Affairs, and the Shah's explanation of measures taken. Russian Minister much annoyed. Anger of Popular party	235
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344	To Mr. Marling ..	124 Tel.	25,	Situation at Tehran. Approves action and language reported in Nos. 339 and 341. Instructs as to refugees. To demand instant withdrawal of troops round Legation, failing which port in Gulf will be seized	236
345	Sir F. Bertie ..	27 Tel.	26,	Dr. Ismail's family. Transmits his request for protection of Legation in Tehran for	237
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347	Mr. Marling ..	157 Tel.	26,	Political situation. Refugees at French, Italian, and British Legations. Town quiet, but apprehensive. Colonel Liakhoff's powers. Proclamation dissolving Assembly	237
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350	Mr. G. Barclay ..	154 Tel. Confidential	27,	Turco-Persian frontier. Refers to No. 325. Gives instructions to Tahir recommended by Council of Ministers. Persian Ambassador's audience of the Sultan. He threatened to leave unless Turks took steps	238

No.	Name.	No.	Date.	SUBJECT.	Page
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352	" "	.. 160 Tel.	27,	Shah's Proclamation. Refers to No. 351. Has given views on to Minister for Foreign Affairs. His answer. Popular apprehensions not allayed	239
353	" "	.. 161 Tel.	27,	Patrols round Legation. Refers to No. 344. Minister for Foreign Affairs promises apology in writing. Conversation as to who gave the order	240
354	" "	.. 162 Tel. Very Conf.	27,	Russian Consul-General in Tehran. Reports appointment of M. Passek. Unfortunate influence exercised by him on M. de Hartwig	240
355	To Mr. O'Beirne	.. 185 Tel.	27,	Zil-es-Sultan. Refers to No. 348. To inform Minister for Foreign Affairs of his appeal, ask for Russian co-operation, and inquire what action can be taken. To observe that his absence seems best means of avoiding complications	240
356	" "	.. 186 Tel.	27,	General situation. Informs of statement in House of Commons on 25th June. Proposes to follow precedent of last Christmas as to joint representations	240
357	To Mr. Marling	.. 128 Tel.	27,	Joint representations. To take action indicated in No. 336	241
358	Mr. O'Beirne	.. 104 Tel.	28,	Turco-Persian frontier. Minister for Foreign Affairs hears Persia has asked for German intervention, and urges importance of letting results of our joint representations at Constantinople be known at once at Tehran	241
359	Mr. Marling	.. 163 Tel.	28,	Patrols round Legation. Reports numbers that morning. Has carried out instructions in No. 344. Bushire most suitable port, but seizure might lead to bust in large numbers at Legation	241
360	Mr. O'Beirne	.. 290	26,	General situation. Transmits official communication in "Official Messenger" of 26th June	241
361	Admiralty ..	.. Confidential	29,	Situation at Tehran. Transmits telegram to Commander-in-chief, East Indies, to be prepared to occupy Gulf port if ordered	243
362	Mr. Marling	.. 164 Tel.	28,	Charges against and insults to Legation. Reports in detail. Conversation with Russian Minister. Five more bastis arrived. Orders given to admit no more unless in visible danger	243
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365	" "	.. 167 Tel. Secret	29,	Situation in provinces. Bast probable at Ispahan. Movement to appoint the Zil Regent. Fighting at Tabreez	245
366	" "	.. 168 Tel.	29,	Communications to the Shah and the Zil. Refers to No. 308. Has only hinted to Russian Minister of joint action proposed	245
367	" "	.. 169 Tel.	29,	Refugees at Gulahek. Impossible to prevent them coming. Presumes protection may be given	246
368	" "	.. 170 Tel.	29,	Patrols round Legation. Refers to No. 363. Describes present situation. Suggests further forbearance would be misplaced, and that demand for Colonel Liakhoff's dismissal would be justified	246
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372	" "	.. 192 Tel.	29,	Turco-Persian frontier. Concurs in suggestion in No. 358. Mr. Marling will be instructed at once	247
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374	To Mr. Marling	.. 129 Tel.	29,	Situation in Tehran. Refers to Nos. 351 and 352. To accept guarantee signed by Shah for security of bastis, and to warn of grave consequences if pledge is not observed. Proclamation of martial law not inconsistent with complete amnesty	248
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378	" "	.. 136 Tel.	29,	Anglo-Russian representations. Answers paragraph 1 of No. 366 in affirmative	249

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380	" ..	138 Tel.	29,	Situation in Tehran. Transmits telegram from Shah to the King, complaining of complicity of Legation with rebels, and asking for an "accomplished Minister" in place of Mr. Marling	249
381	" ..	139 Tel.	29,	Situation in Tehran. Transmits reply from the King for communication to Shah and Minister for Foreign Affairs. His Majesty has complete confidence in Legation and Mr. Marling. Repudiates Shah's accusations, and insists that insults to Legation must cease	250
382	To Sir F. Bertie ..	285	29,	Action of Russian Minister and Colonel Liakhoff. Transmits telegraphic correspondence with Tehran and St. Petersburg since 13th June. To explain situation to M. Pichon, and to ask for French support at St. Petersburg	250
383	Mr. G. Barclay ..	155 Tel.	30,	Turco-Persian frontier. Mr. Wratishaw reports on 23rd instant improvement in situation	250
384	Mr. O'Beirne ..	105 Tel.	30,	Withdrawal of troops round Legation. Refers to No. 370. M. de Hartwig has supported Mr. Marling's request officially and privately. All Cossacks now withdrawn	251
385	" ..	106 Tel.	30,	Joint communication to Shah. Refers to No. 336. M. de Hartwig instructed to concert with Mr. Marling as to publication of	251
386	Mr. Marling ..	172 Tel.	29,	Troops round Legation. Unsatisfactory reply received. Does not propose to ask for Russian colleague's co-operation in view of No. 346	251
387	" ..	173 Tel.	30,	Troops and Legation. Refers to No. 386. Apology received from Shah. Urges that this is not sufficient. French can bear us out as to Russian attitude	251
388	" ..	174 Tel.	30,	Disturbances at Resht. Refers to No. 365. Reports	252
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390	To Sir F. Bertie ..	78 Tel.	30,	Situation in Tehran. To request French Government to act as proposed in last paragraph of No. 387	252
391	To Mr. Marling ..	141 Tel.	30,	Dr. Ismail's family. Refers to No. 345. To protect them unofficially, if feasible	252
392	" ..	142 Tel.	30,	Insults to His Majesty's Legation at Tehran. Refers to No. 387. To tell Minister for Foreign Affairs apology offered is insufficient. Presumes police and troops have now been removed	253
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ERRATA.

Page 6, No. 10, line 2. For "No. 25" read "No. 24."
 Page 12, No. 26. The signature should be "Louis Mallet."
 Page 18, No. 27. The telegram should be dated "April 7," and should appear on p. 9 as "No. 17*."
 Page 86, No. 126, line 3. For "No. 12" read "No. 112."
 Page 141, No. 185, line 1. For "No. 91" read "No. 97."
 Page 198, No. 268. For Registry number "[1957]" read "[19571]."
 Page 211, No. 295, line 2. For "No. 13" read "No. 143."
 Page 251, No. 384, line 1. For "27th" read "29th."

CONFIDENTIAL.

Further Correspondence respecting the Affairs of Persia.

PART XIV.

[2000]

No. 1*.

Sir Edward Grey to Mr. Marling.

(No. 70.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Foreign Office, April 1, 1908.

LEASE of land at Mohammerah.

Please refer to your despatch No. 18, Commercial, of 21st December, 1907.

You should instruct His Majesty's Consul to furnish a plan of land which has been leased. He should also report whether Messrs. Wöckhaus were given option to renew the lease, and whether any further land is available on the river bank.

[11018]

No. 1.

Sir Edward Grey to Mr. Marling.

(No. 69.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Foreign Office, April 1, 1908.

PERSIAN Minister in London. With reference to your telegram No. 84 of the 31st ultimo.

There does not as yet appear to me to be any reason why we should withdraw our acceptance of Ehtesham-es-Sultaneh.

Is his departure imminent?

[11197]

No. 2.

India Office to Foreign Office.—(Received April 2.)

Sir,

India Office, April 1, 1908.

IN reply to your letter of the 25th ultimo, I am directed to say that Mr. Secretary Morley concurs in the instructions which the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs propose to send to His Majesty's Ambassador at St. Petersburg as to the steps to be taken jointly with the Russian Government to frustrate any action by the German Government with a view to a loan to the Persian Government and the establishment of a German bank at Tehran.

I am, &c.
(Signed) A. GODLEY.

[11256]

No. 3.

India Office to Foreign Office.—(Received April 2.)

Sir,

India Office, April 1, 1908.

IN reply to your letter, dated the 26th March last, as to the exchange of the Meshed-Seistan and the Khaf-Nasratabad telegraph lines, I am directed to say that Mr. Secretary Morley agrees in the view of the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs that the discussion of the details of the transfer at St. Petersburg need not delay the steps to be taken at Tehran by the Russian and British Representatives to obtain the consent of the Persian Government to the exchange; and that the question of the transfer to Russia of the British rights over the Tehran-Khanikin line need not be raised immediately.

As regards the question of the signallers at the terminal stations of the two lines, Mr. Morley is of opinion that it will be best to attempt to obtain the consent of the

Russian Government to the retention of British signallers at Meshed and Tehran, even if that should involve the retention of a Russian signaller at Nasratabad. Neither Government presumably will claim to retain signallers at the intermediate stations situated in the zone of the other. Copy of a note by the Director-in-chief of the Indo-European Telegraph Department on the subject is inclosed.

As regards the settlement of the financial details of the transfer of the two lines, and with reference to your letter of the 31st ultimo, I am to inclose copy of a minute by the Director-in-chief on Mr. Marling's telegram No. 82 of the 26th March. There appears to be some uncertainty as to the exact facts of the liabilities of the Persian Government in respect of the Meshed-Seistan line. But, as indicated by Mr. Kirk, no real assistance in clearing up the doubtful points can be given either here or by the Government of India. Mr. Morley would suggest that this should be pointed out to Mr. Marling, and that he should be instructed to procure locally all the available information and submit it in a tabulated form. Until this is done it does not seem possible for any definite views to be formed on the details of the transfer in its financial aspect.

I am, &c.
(Signed) A. GODLEY.

Inclosure in No. 3.

Memoranda by Mr. Kirk.

(1.)

THE Government of India in their despatch No. 16, dated the 16th January last, wrote that both Great Britain and Russia would retain their own signallers at Tehran and Meshed as at present, but with this arrangement it would be difficult to claim that Russian signallers should be removed from the terminal stations of the Khaf-Seistan line, although Russia cannot justifiably claim to retain any signallers at intermediate stations. There would therefore be Russian signallers at Nasratabad and Khaf to telegraph over the British section, and British signallers at Khaf, Meshed, and Tehran to telegraph over the Russian section. The Government of India show in their despatch that they want British signallers to work over the Tehran-Meshed line even though it entails the Russians keeping signallers at Nasratabad and Khaf to work over that section. But if Sir A. Nicolson can obtain the removal of the Russian signaller at Nasratabad so much the better. British signallers would also work between Khaf and Meshed over the Russian section, seeing that they would be stationed at both these places.

(Signed) H. A. KIRK.

March 27, 1908.

(2.)

[Mr. Marling's telegram No. 82, dated March 26, 1908.]

IN Sir A. Nicolson's letter No. 487, dated the 21st September, 1907, he wrote to the Foreign Office that M. Isvolsky had reported that the Persian Government had tacitly consented to the Russian Administration undertaking the upkeep of the Meshed-Seistan line, and in inclosure No. 2 of that letter the staff employed and the cost of repairs are shown. The annual repairs are said to have cost from 600*l.* to 1,000*l.*, and the yearly pay of the native line staff to be 657*l.*

Mr. Marling's information is that cost of telegraph and line establishment is 2,102 rupees per mensem, which is equivalent to 1,680*l.* a-year. By telegraph it is presumed he means the repairs of the telegraph line.

The information given by the Persian Director at Meshed that he pays the rent of offices and the wages of Persian signallers, and that the Russians pay all other charges seems likely to be right, but the correctness of these details can only be found out locally, and no assistance can well be expected from this side in the matter. The payments by the Governors of Seistan and Kain may have been made for the construction of the line, and not for its maintenance. If no such payments ever were made by these officials, it is curious that reports should have got about to the contrary.

(Signed) H. A. KIRK.

March 27, 1908.

[11212]

No. 4.

Treasury to Foreign Office.—(Received April 2.)

Treasury Chambers, April 1, 1908.

Sir,

I HAVE laid before the Lords Commissioners of His Majesty's Treasury Mr. Mallet's letter of the 2nd ultimo, and its inclosed correspondence, with reference to the proposed acquisition by the Indo-European Telegraph Department of the control of the telegraph line from Borasjun to Mohammerah.

In reply, I am to say that, after carefully considering the circumstances explained by Secretary Sir E. Grey, my Lords cannot find any sufficient justification for expenditure from Imperial funds in connection with this project, and they regret, therefore, to be unable to sanction the proposal that the Imperial Government should share in the cost.

I am, &c.
(Signed) G. H. MURRAY.

[11026]

No. 5.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir A. Nicolson.

(No. 91.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Foreign Office, April 2, 1908.

SUBVENTION to German School in Tehran.

With reference to telegrams Nos. 85 and 86 of the 31st March from Tehran.

I request that you will propose to the Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs that instructions should be sent to the Representatives of the two Powers at Tehran to inform the Persian Government in concert that they ought to have consulted the Russian and British Governments previously, before securing the subvention on the customs. Although the two Powers have no desire to prevent a subvention being given by the Persian Government to the German School if the means are available, they have a prior lien on the customs, and if the revenue thereof is further pledged without the assent of the two Governments and of M. Bizot, the former will be obliged to take joint measures in order to prevent their interest from receiving injury.

[11197]

No. 6.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir A. Nicolson.

(No. 92.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Foreign Office, April 2, 1908.

LOANS in Persia.

With reference to your telegram No. 56 of the 23rd March.

I request that you will inform M. Isvolsky that His Majesty's Government agree to his proposal that joint action should be taken in order to forestall possible activity on the part of Germany. You should suggest to his Excellency that instructions should be sent by the British and Russian Governments to their Representatives at Paris to request the French Government to send instructions to their Legation at Tehran to convey the necessary recommendation to the Financial Adviser to the Persian Government.

[10052]

No. 7.

Sir Edward Grey to Mr. Marling.

(No. 73.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Foreign Office, April 2, 1908.

WITH reference to my telegram No. 29 of the 31st January.

Capture of Dayir pirates.

I request that you will inform the Persian Government of our appreciation of the Khan of Bunder Rig's services in connection with the above.

When you have done so, His Majesty's Consul-General at Bushire should be informed, so that he may let the Khan know of the action taken.

[11319]

No. 8.

India Office to Foreign Office.—(Received April 3.)

THE Under-Secretary of State for India presents his compliments to the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and, by direction of Mr. Secretary Morley, forwards herewith, for the information of the Secretary of State, copy of inclosures in a letter from the Foreign Secretary to the Government of India, dated the 5th March relative to the lease of ground for a corn wharf to Messrs. Wöneckhaus and Co at, Mohammerah.

India Office, April 2, 1908.

Inclosure 1 in No. 8.

Major Cox to Government of India.

(Confidential.)

Bushire, February 9, 1908.

I HAVE the honour to reply to Foreign Department letter, dated the 4th January, 1908, on the subject of the lease of ground for a corn wharf by M. Wöneckhaus at Mohammerah.

2. Residency Diary entry No. 2359 of 1907, quoted in the Government of India's letter under reply, was followed by entry No. 2402 in the diary for the ensuing week.

The transaction presented itself to me as a *fait accompli*, and I did not allude to it during my subsequent interview with the Sheikh of Mohammerah, regarding other urgent topics, at which Haji Rais was as usual present and, indeed, helpful.

I now have the honour to attach, for the information of Government, copies of two communications received by me from His Majesty's Consul, Mohammerah, in reply to a request to be supplied with all details obtainable.

3. The subject of the German firm's interest in the Karun wheat trade was discussed up to a certain point in the comprehensive Confidential Report on German commercial activity forwarded with my letter dated the 27th November, 1907, to which I beg reference.

Since September the following shipments have been recorded:—

					Bags of Grain.
Steam-ship "Galicia," October 6	..	..	..	..	1,150
Steam-ship "Assyria," October 31	..	..	..	..	1,538
Steam-ship "Savoia," December 15	..	..	..	..	348
Steam-ship "Sicilia," January 20	..	..	..	..	250*
Total	..	..	..	..	3,286

* Also 180 bags for Lingah.

4. The difficulty at Mohammerah is the fact that the Sheikh's astute factotum, Haji Rais, now connected with him by marriage, who exercises great influence over his master, is also agent for the German line and also banker to the Mohammerah Customs.

In the latter capacity he always has at his disposal a quantity of ready cash which he is in a position to utilize at any moment, if opportunity arises, for the purchase of grain for Messrs. Wöneckhaus.

Further, by employing him as a mediary it is believed that the German firm are able habitually to under-declare their export consignments, the fact being that Haji Rais ships the grain in bulk and declares it at whatever weight he pleases. This gives Haji Rais' patrons a considerable pull over other traders, and enables the former to pay higher prices than the latter can afford to do.

I do not see what more we can do than to stimulate Messrs. Lynch, or failing them other traders, to lay themselves out to reduce the German operations by lively competition, which Government may be able to assist by exerting influence in other ways on the Sheikh and Haji Rais.

A report which I hope to submit to Government at an early date regarding the Sheikh of Mohammerah's affairs generally may possibly suggest an opening for action in that direction.

Inclosure 2 in No. 8.

Consul McDouall to Major Cox.

(Confidential.)

Mohammerah, January 25, 1908.

YOURS of the 21st. Having been away with the "Lawrence" party surveying the Mared-Qubban Line, I cannot obtain particulars for this post about Wöneckhaus' lease up to date; but give you herewith all I know.

The lease was to be written in English, and witnessed by the German Consul at Bushire. All that remained was for this to be done; but so far I have not heard that Wöneckhaus' agent has handed over the signed lease. The rent is about 1,000 tomans a-year; but I have not the exact figure. Lease is for eight years. Land is to be 40 metres along river and 100 metres deep; but a right of way 2 metres wide must be acknowledged along bank of river. At end of eight years if the Sardar Arfa requires the land for building he resumes possession; if he wishes to release it for purposes such as Wöneckhaus', Wöneckhaus have right to release it at highest rent offered by others. If he resumes possession, any buildings which Wöneckhaus may make of mud, brick, or stone becomes the property of the landlord; but they have the right to take away iron, such as corrugated-iron roofs, &c. They have the right to build subject to above.

Details were arranged by Haji Rais, but the Sardar refused to hear of a longer lease.

I think he is too far committed to withdraw from it now.

Wöneckhaus has been purchasing barley and wheat, chiefly former, and, except at first, through Haji Rais. More than half was I think from the small ports and less than half from Karun; they still have some on hand but only a small quantity. Forty tons was shut out by the "Sicilia." Total value grain exported to Germany for nine months is 976,056 krans, or about 19,500*l*.

Inclosure 3 in No. 8.

Consul McDouall to Major Cox.

(Confidential.)

Mohammerah, February 1, 1908.

IN continuation of my demi-official of the 25th January, I have now got full particulars and give following corrections and additions regarding the piece of land leased to the German firm of Wöneckhaus, obtained from Haji Rais.

Ground is 50 metres on river and 70 deep, and not 40 × 100 as given.

Rent, 10,000 krans per annum.

Document accepting terms has been signed by firm and witnessed by German Consul at Bushire.

Lease is to be given when ground is ready. The Sardar Arfa is to surround ground with a mud wall, and build four sheds, one in each corner. This is being done, and as soon as completed will be handed to firm with the formal lease embodying the terms agreed on already given in my last.

The rent appears a very high one.

Inclosure 4 in No. 8.

Government of India to Major Cox.

(Confidential.)

Fort William, January 4, 1908.

WITH reference to my paragraph No. 2359 of the Persian Gulf diary for the week ending the 17th November, 1907, regarding the leasing of a part of the new corn wharf at Mohammerah to Messrs. Wönckhaus and Co., I am directed to request that you will kindly ascertain through His Majesty's Consul at Mohammerah the extent of M. Wönckhaus' interest in the Karun wheat trade. I am also to ask whether during your recent visit to Mohammerah you were able to learn the circumstances of the grant of the corn wharf to Messrs. Wönckhaus and Co.

2. We shall be glad to receive from time to time any information you may obtain as to the operations of this firm.

[11411]

No. 9.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received April 3.)

(No. 60.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

St. Petersburg, April 3, 1908.

GERMAN school at Tehran.

Your telegram No. 83 of the 20th ultimo.

I have received a Memorandum this morning from Minister for Foreign Affairs to the effect that, the Assembly having opposed the grant of a subsidy, the President of the Chamber had announced that the Shah would pay the money from his privy purse. In these circumstances M. Isvolsky thinks that it would be superfluous for the two Governments to enter a protest. On the other hand, he considers that, if it should be decided hereafter to pledge the customs revenues for the above purpose, the lien which we hold on those revenues would clearly justify us in protesting against such a measure.

Before I act on your telegram No. 91 of the 2nd instant, I should be glad if you could inform me whether the intention of the Shah to pay the subsidy out of his privy purse is correctly reported, as it does not quite coincide with the information supplied by Mr. Marling in his telegram No. 76 of the 13th ultimo.

[11412]

No. 10.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received April 3.)

(No. 87.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Tehran, April 3, 1908.

TURCO-PERSIAN Frontier Commission.

Please refer to telegram No. 25, dated the 28th ultimo, from Mr. Wratishaw.

Mohammed-es-Sultaneh's proposals do not seem practicable or reasonable to Mushir-ed-Dowleh.

The Commissioner is accordingly being instructed to draw up, after consultation with the two Consuls, a proposal based on the lines indicated in my telegram No. 75 of the 12th ultimo (i.e., that the frontier should be found in the debatable zone), and not insisting that the Turks should begin by withdrawing, this proposal to be communicated to the Turkish Commissioner.

[11319]

No. 11.

Sir Edward Grey to Mr. Marling.

(No. 74.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Foreign Office, April 3, 1908.

MOHAMMERAH.

I have now received from the India Office the information (except as to whether more land is available on river bank) asked for in my telegram No. 70.

[11619]

No. 12.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received April 4.)

(No. 88.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Tehran, April 4, 1908.

PERSIAN Minister-designate to London.

With reference to your telegram No. 69 of the 1st April, Ehtesham-es-Sultaneh, who goes first to Berlin ostensibly to present his letters of recall, leaves Tehran in two days.

The fact that Ehtesham-es-Sultaneh and Baron von Richthofen were to leave the same day seemed to lend probability to news which M. de Hartwig had received from the Russian Government, to the effect that the ex-President of the Assembly was going to Berlin in connection with financial matters, although Count Quadt categorically denied that he had in any way suggested or countenanced such a plan, when M. de Hartwig asked him for explanations this morning.

Please consider second paragraph as confidential.

[10734]

No. 13.

Foreign Office to India Office.

Sir,

Foreign Office, April 4, 1908.

WITH reference to your letter of the 19th February, relative to the steps to be taken to give effect to the arrangement with the Russian Government for the exchange of the Tehran-Meshed and Khaf-Nasratabad telegraph lines, I am directed by Secretary Sir Edward Grey to transmit to you herewith, to be laid before Mr. Secretary Morley, copy of a despatch from His Majesty's Ambassador at St. Petersburg⁶ reporting the action which he has taken in fulfilment of the instructions conveyed to him by Sir E. Grey's despatch No. 85 of the 18th ultimo, copy of which was forwarded to you in the letter from this Office of the following day.

Mr. Morley will observe that Sir A. Nicolson, in the Memorandum which he handed to the Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs on the subject, omitted all mention of the information in the possession of His Majesty's Government with regard to the manner in which Russian control is exercised over the Tehran-Meshed line, and as to the disbursements made on this account by the Russian Administration.

Sir E. Grey is disposed to approve Sir A. Nicolson's action in this respect, not only for the reasons given by his Excellency in his despatch, but also because the information on the subject furnished by the Government of India is, on some points, in contradiction with that supplied by His Majesty's Charge d'Affaires at Tehran, so that the true facts of the case are not yet certainly known to His Majesty's Government.

Sir E. Grey would also approve Sir A. Nicolson's proposal not to raise the question of the retention of a Russian signaller at Nasratabad after the exchange of the lines has taken effect, though it appears to him to be unlikely that the Russian Government will consent to forgo this right, in view of the desire of His Majesty's Government to retain British signallers at Tehran and at Meshed. This latter point is not, it is true, specifically mentioned in the Memorandum, but that His Majesty's Government attach importance to it appears with sufficient clearness from the last sentence of the penultimate paragraph of that paper.

Sir E. Grey would be glad to learn whether Mr. Morley sees any objection to the proposed approval of Sir A. Nicolson's action, and of the terms of his Excellency's Memorandum.

I am, &c.
(Signed) F. A. CAMPBELL.

⁶ See Part XIII, No. 417.

[11784]

No. 14.

Consul Stevens to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received April 6.)

(No. 3.)

Sir

Batoum, March 26, 1908.

I HAVE the honour to inform you that, although the rumours of war with Turkey, so widely circulated in the Caucasus some weeks ago, and which created something like a panic in military and other circles at the time, have to a great extent subsided, yet uneasiness on the part of the Russian Government as to future developments on the Russo-Turkish frontiers and in Persia is still apparent.

With a view, therefore, to avoid a surprise, or being taken in a state of unpreparedness should a hostile movement be suddenly forced on them by the turn which political events in the two mentioned countries may at a later date take, the military authorities of the Caucasus have for some time past been engaged in carrying out measures of precaution.

As already reported, troops have been moved to various points of the western and south-western confines of the Caucasus, and further military activity is now being displayed in furnishing them and the fortified centres with new siege and field guns and other necessary war material for placing them in a high state of efficiency, for which purpose the rank-and-file are also being daily strenuously drilled.

It may be that the present prosecution of armaments is only the natural outcome of the reported depletion, during the late war with Japan, of the various arsenals and depot stations of their stores and munitions of war for the requirements of the Russian troops in Manchuria which are now being replenished, but the fact nevertheless remains that elaborate preparations for possible hostilities are being vigorously pushed forward.

About ten days ago the steam-ship "Ararat," belonging to the Russian Steam Navigation and Trading Company, discharged a cargo of close upon 900 tons of a variety of war material at this port, including field guns; and the Government transport "Pruth," which sailed hence to-day, has for three days past been landing field pieces, siege guns, ammunition, and other material for the exigencies of war for Kars, Batoum, and several points of minor importance along the frontier.

The Vice-Consul at Baku informs me, it is rumoured in that town, that the authorities of the Vladikavkaz Railway have received orders to be prepared to suspend the circulation of all goods trains on their line between Baku-Petrovsk-Beslan and Rostov for a fortnight, during which time the lines are to be exclusively engaged in running military and the ordinary number of daily passenger trains.

It is probable, therefore, that further warlike stores and material are to be shortly brought to the Caucasus by rail, or that the foreshadowed reinforcement of the army of the Caucasus by the transport of fresh troops from Russia is about to be undertaken by the Russian Government.

I have, &c.
(Signed) P. STEVENS.

[11866]

No. 15.

India Office to Foreign Office.—(Received April 6.)

THE Under-Secretary of State for India presents his compliments to the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and, by direction of Mr. Secretary Morley, forwards herewith, for the information of the Secretary of State, copy of a telegram to the Viceroy, dated the 1st instant, relative to the exchange of British and Russian telegraph lines in Persia.

India Office, April 6, 1908.

Inclosure in No. 15.

Mr. Morley to Government of India.

(Telegraphic.) P.

India Office, April 1, 1908.

PERSIA. Exchange of telegraph lines.

Your telegram dated the 20th ultimo.

Pending arrangements with the Indo-European Telegraph Department, it would be convenient if initial transfer of Khaf-Nasratabad line were accepted and work carried on by Indian Telegraph Department through its signallers on the spot, though there is no objection to responsible control being ultimately vested in Indo-European Department, as indicated in paragraph 4 of letter to Foreign Office dated the 19th February.

This telegram should be repeated to Tehran Legation.

[11871]

No. 16.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received April 6.)

(No. 89.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Tehran, April 6, 1908.

MINISTER-DESIGNATE to London.

At 5 p.m. yesterday Mushir-ed-Dowleh told me that he believed Ehtesham-es-Sultaneh would start to-day, or possibly to-morrow, but that he did not know.

As a matter of fact, Ehtesham-es-Sultaneh had left Tehran at 4 p.m.

The above with reference to my telegram of 31st March on this subject (No. 84).

[11958]

No. 17.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received April 7.)

(No. 90.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Tehran, April 7, 1908.

SINKING fund of loan and financial situation.

The promised answer of the Finance Minister, referred to in my telegram No. 86 of the 31st ultimo, has not been received and nothing has been paid.

[10052]

No. 18.

Foreign Office to India Office.

Sir,

Foreign Office, April 7, 1908.

I AM directed by Secretary Sir Edward Grey to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 21st ultimo, relative to the services of the Khan of Bunder Rig in connection with the capture of the Dayir pirates, and to transmit to you herewith copy of a telegram which he has addressed to His Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires at Tehran,* instructing him to express to the Persian Government the satisfaction felt by His Majesty's Government at the action taken by the Khan.

Sir E. Grey concurs in the proposal of Mr. Secretary Morley to approve the suggestion of the Government of India that the Khan should be informed directly by His Majesty's Consul-General at Bushire of the intimation made to the Persian Government, and he presumes that the necessary instructions on this point will be conveyed to Major Cox by the Government of India.

I am, &c.
(Signed) LOUIS MALLET.

[1580]

* No. 7.

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[11256]

No. 19.

Foreign Office to India Office.

Sir,

Foreign Office, April 7, 1908.

I AM directed by Secretary Sir Edward Grey to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 1st instant, relative to the exchange with the Russian Government of the Tehran-Meshed with the Khaf-Nasratabad telegraph line.

With regard to the proposed retention of British signallers at Tehran and Meshed on the former line, in return for which the Russian Government would probably demand the retention of a Russian signaller at Nasratabad on the latter, I am to offer for the consideration of Mr. Secretary Morley the following observations, which are the result of a further examination to which that question has been submitted in this Department.

Sir E. Grey understands that the Government of India attach great importance to the presence of British signallers at Tehran and Meshed because, in their absence, British messages might be unduly delayed and inaccurately transmitted, and opportunity might be given to the Russian Telegraph Administration to tamper with British cyphers.

Taking first the latter point, I am to observe that a similar opportunity already exists on all the lines under Russian control over whose wires British messages now pass. The addition to their number of the Tehran-Meshed line would therefore not sensibly increase the danger referred to, from which, moreover, no great harm appears so far to have resulted.

The possibility of delay and incorrect transmission of British messages does not appear to Sir E. Grey to constitute an objection of such importance as to outweigh the disadvantages to British interests which, in his view, are to be feared from the retention of a Russian signaller at Nasratabad, and the objection will disappear altogether if, as is believed to be not unlikely, the Russian Government decide to intrust the management of the Tehran-Meshed line to the Indo-European Telegraph Company, who would introduce business-like and efficient methods of management.

The retention of a Russian signaller at Nasratabad appears, on the other hand, to be open to grave objection not only on the general ground that the presence of such an official in the British sphere of influence is in any case undesirable, but also and more particularly in view of the proposed extension of the Meshed-Seistan line to Koh-i-Malik-Siah, whereby the Persian telegraph system would be linked up with the Indian line running through Nuski and Robat.

On the realization of this project the exclusion of all possibility of foreign interference with telegraphic communication would become of paramount importance to British and Indian interests.

For these reasons, Sir E. Grey would propose, subject to Mr. Morley's concurrence, to instruct Sir A. Nicolson to withdraw the suggestion made by him to the Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs for the maintenance of the British signallers at Tehran and Meshed.

As regards the last paragraph of your letter, and the second note by the Director-in-chief of the Indo-European Telegraph Department which refers to it, I am to call attention to my letter of the 4th instant, forwarding copy of a despatch from Sir A. Nicolson, which contains the suggestion that His Majesty's Government should not make any communication to the Russian Government relative to the conditions of the control exercised by the latter over the Meshed-Seistan line, but should await the receipt from them of the necessary particulars.

Sir E. Grey will await Mr. Morley's views on this suggestion before proceeding further in the matter, and hopes that he may be favoured with them without delay.

I am, &c.

(Signed) LOUIS MALLET.

[12164]

No. 20.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received April 8.)

(No. 66.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

St. Petersburg, April 8, 1908.

MR. MARLING'S telegram No. 91 of the 7th instant. Proposed exchange of telegraph lines in Persia.

I have inquired whether M. Isvolsky concurs in the suggestion that the two Representatives at Tehran should be left to determine the mode of approaching the Persian Government to obtain their consent to the principle of exchange, and at the same time have mentioned the wish of the Persian Government to erect a second line to Shahrud, adding that, in view of negotiations, the Director was staying his hand. I further told M. Isvolsky that I trusted that, while the two Representatives in Tehran were engaged in getting the Persian Government's consent to the exchange of lines, we should be able, on the basis of the proposals set forth in my Memorandum of the 23rd ultimo, to arrange in St. Petersburg the details of the exchange, so that, as soon as the consent of the Persian Government has been obtained, the transfer can take place without any delay. I think it would be advisable that, until Minister for Foreign Affairs has replied to my Memorandum and given his views, no action should be taken with reference to the details of the exchange of the two telegraph lines.

[12168]

No. 21.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received April 8.)

(No. 68.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

St. Petersburg, April 8, 1908.

SUBSIDY for German school.

My telegram No. 60 of the 3rd instant and your telegram No. 96 of to-day's date.

It would appear from Mr. Marling's despatch No. 53 that subsidy is, in fact, secured on the revenue of the customs. Before taking any action in the matter, I am waiting till you receive his despatch, which leaves by bag to-morrow.

(Repeated to Tehran.)

[12140]

No. 22.

Mr. G. Barclay to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received April 8.)

(No. 89.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Constantinople, April 8, 1908.

FOLLOWING telegram No. 25 to me and No. 26 to Tehran, dated the 7th instant, received yesterday from Mr. Wratislaw at Urumia:—

"I have heard nothing of the Turkish Commission.

"The instructions promised to the Persian Commissioner regarding the basis of negotiations have not arrived.

"It is not clear to me whether the proposal which he is to make to the Turkish Commissioner is to be such as to render it possible for the Commissioners to effect a settlement on the spot, or whether he is merely to state what is the frontier line claimed by his Government, so as to afford a basis for subsequent negotiations at Constantinople on the lines of the telegram which I received from Sir N. O'Connor here on the 27th November, 1907.

"The latter course would be tantamount to claiming the *status quo*.

"In the former case the Persians would have to make considerable concessions, and, unless I am informed previously of the views of His Majesty's Government, I shall not know what advice to give the Persian Commissioner."

[12141]

No. 23.

Mr. G. Barclay to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received April 8.)

(No. 90.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Constantinople, April 8, 1908.

WITH regard to Turco-Persian frontier question and Mr. Wratislaw's telegram No. 25.

The Porte has been considering the question of sending further instructions to Tahir Pasha, and I am informed by the Grand Vizier that the draft was submitted to the Palace yesterday.

[11958]

No. 24.

Sir Edward Grey to Mr. Marling.

(No. 75.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Foreign Office, April 8, 1908.

SUBSIDY to German school.

With reference to Sir A. Nicolson's telegram No. 60 (which was repeated to you) and to your telegram No. 86.

You should answer question contained in the former telegram. Would it, in your opinion, be advisable that a joint warning should be addressed to the Persian Government, even if the fact be true that the Customs do not now form the security for the subsidy (see my telegram No. 72)?

[8975]

No. 25.

Sir Edward Grey to Mr. Marling.

(No. 52.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, April 8, 1908.

I HAVE received your despatch No. 42, Confidential, of the 28th February, forwarding copies of correspondence relative to the possibility of opening up regular communications between Mohammerah and Kermanshah by way of Ahwaz, Dizful, and Pusht-i-Kuh; and I observe that His Majesty's Consul at Kermanshah proposes to undertake a journey over the suggested route in order to obtain first-hand information as to its possibilities.

I concur in the opinion expressed by you that, until the results of this investigation are known it would be premature to express any views as to the merits of the scheme.

I should also hesitate to make any definite pronouncement on the subject before being placed in possession of any observations which may be offered by the Government of India, to whose consideration His Majesty's Consul-General at Bushire has already submitted the project.

I should wish you, in the meanwhile, to cause to be conveyed to Captain Haworth an expression of my appreciation of the zeal and ability which he has displayed in the compilation of his Report.

I am, &c.
(Signed) E. GREY.

[10475]

No. 26.

Foreign Office to India Office.

Sir,

Foreign Office, April 8, 1908.

I AM directed by Secretary Sir Edward Grey to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 26th ultimo, forwarding copies of correspondence relative to the possibility of opening up regular communications between Mohammerah and Kermanshah by way of Ahwaz, Dizful, and Pusht-i-Kuh, with a view to encourage the development of British trade.

I am to inform you that Sir E. Grey has received a despatch from His Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires at Tehran, forwarding, for his information, copies of the same papers, and I am to transmit to you herewith, to be laid before Mr. Secretary Morley, copies of that communication and of the reply which he has returned to it,* setting forth the reasons for which he thinks it advisable to refrain for the present from the expression of any definite opinion on the scheme proposed by His Majesty's Consul at Kermanshah.

I am, &c.
(Signed) LOUIS MATTET.

* See Part XIII, No. 358; and ante, No. 25.

[12170]

No. 27.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received April 9.)

(No. 91.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Tehran, April 9, 1908.

EXCHANGE of telegraph lines and maintenance of signallers.

Latter question might be settled later. Our signallers might be retained at Tehran and Meshed, and Russian signallers at Khaf, and elsewhere only where there is a Russian Consul.

In view of the contemplated exchange, the Director of the Indo-European Telegraph Department has received instructions not to act without special authorization from London in the matter of the erection of the second wire between Tehran and Shahrud, for which the Persian Government are pressing.

M. de Hartwig thinks the opportunity favourable for effecting exchange, as we could then carry out repairs on the Khaf-Seistan section of the line. The opportunity might be taken, but Mr. Barker requires first to be authorized to take over the Khaf-Seistan section, together with all existing Russian obligations.

[12258]

No. 28.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received April 9.)

(No. 92.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Tehran, April 9, 1908.

WONCKHAUS Wharf at Mohammerah.

Mr. McDouall telegraphs that 600 yards at least are available along the bank. Please refer to Foreign Office telegram No. 74, dated 3rd April.

[12388]

No. 29.

India Office to Foreign Office.—(Received April 10.)

Sir,

India Office, April 9, 1908.

I AM directed to acknowledge the receipt of your letters of the 4th April and of the 7th April as to the arrangement with the Russian Government for the exchange of the Tehran-Meshed and Khaf-Nasratabad telegraph lines.

In reply to the former letter, I am directed to say that Mr. Secretary Morley concurs in the proposal of the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs to approve the action of His Majesty's Ambassador at St. Petersburg, reported in his despatch No. 153, dated the 23rd March last, and the terms of the Memorandum communicated by him to the Russian Government.

Copy of a Memorandum on the subject by the Director-in-chief of the Indo-European Telegraph Department is inclosed herewith.

With regard to the question discussed in your letter of the 7th April as to the retention of a Russian signaller at Nasratabad and of British signallers at Meshed and Tehran after the exchange of the lines has taken effect, I am to say that Mr. Morley recognizes that a request by the Russian Government for the retention of a Russian signaller at Nasratabad must be agreed to if British signallers are to be retained at Meshed and Tehran. He also recognizes that the presence of British signallers in the Russian "zone" and of Russian signallers in the British "zone" may have effects tending to frustrate the object aimed at by the negotiations for the exchange of the two lines, especially if hereafter the Khaf-Nasratabad line is extended to link up with the Central Persian line at Koh-i-Malik Siah or elsewhere.

As regards the disadvantages to be anticipated if British messages over the Tehran-Meshed line are handled exclusively by Russian signallers, Mr. Morley agrees that, in view of the similar opportunities already existing on other lines under Russian control, the risk in respect of the secrecy of British cyphers may be ignored; and he presumes that, even if the Tehran-Meshed line is not intrusted to the Indo-European Telegraph Company, the Russian Government will not be in a position to evade the obligation to provide a satisfactory service, if the British Government have solid

[1580]

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ground for complaint of delay or other improper treatment in connection with their messages.

I am to inclose copy of a telegram that has been addressed to the Viceroy asking for the views of the Government of India on the points raised in your letter.

I am, &c.

(Signed) A. GODLEY.

Inclosure 1 in No. 29.

Memorandum by Mr. Kirk respecting Foreign Office Letter dated April 4, 1908.

THE Russian Government have now been placed in possession of the views of the British Government with regard to the arrangements to be carried out on the Tehran-Meshed telegraph line after its transfer. They have been informed of the proposed retention of the British signallers at Tehran and Meshed. With regard to this proposal they may reply that, from the agreement for the transfer of the lines, it was not understood by them that British signallers would be retained at Tehran and Meshed, and that they had not contemplated that the Russian signaller at Nasratabad should remain there. If this should be the reply given I think it would be necessary to put the case before the Government of India with the inquiry whether they would be prepared to agree to the removal of the British signallers at Tehran and Meshed in return for the withdrawal of the Russian signaller from Nasratabad. On the other hand, the Russian Government may accept the view that British signallers should work at Tehran and Meshed, and the Russian signaller remain at Nasratabad. In this case, if experience showed that the presence of the Russian signaller at Nasratabad was detrimental to British interests, the question could be raised later about his withdrawal, in return for the removal of our men from the Tehran and Meshed offices.

Sir A. Nicolson will presumably in a few days be made acquainted with the views of the Russian Government on the Memorandum he has placed before them. I do not think we should move further in the matter until it is known what the Russian views are.

With reference to the last paragraph of the Foreign Office letter, I think the Secretary of State can certainly agree to the approval proposed.

(Signed) H. A. KIRK.

April 7, 1908.

Inclosure 2 in No. 29.

Mr. Morley to Government of India.

(Secret.)

(Telegraphic.)

India Office, April 9, 1908.

YOUR Secret letter of the 16th January last. Exchange of Persian telegraph lines. Proposed retention of British signallers at Meshed and Tehran. It seems probable that Russian Government will object altogether to presence of British signallers in their zone, and they will certainly make retention of Russian signaller at Nasratabad condition of agreeing to retention of British signallers at Meshed and Tehran. It seems best in these circumstances not to press for retention of British signallers at Meshed and Tehran. What are your views? Presence of British signallers in Russian zone and *vice versa* will tend to frustrate objects of policy aimed at by exchange of lines, especially in event of Khaf-Nasratabad line being linked up hereafter with Central Persian line. Presence of Russian signaller in our zone seems greater evil than possible delays, &c., consequent upon withdrawal of our signallers from Meshed and Tehran.

[12393]

No. 30.

Messrs. Ellinger and Co. to Foreign Office.—(Received April 10.)

Dear Sir,

28, Oxford Street, Manchester, April 9, 1908.

WE shall be glad to hear if we may allow Messrs. Andrew Weir and Co., of 6, Lloyd's Avenue, E.C., inspection at the office of our Solicitors, Messrs. E. F. Turner and Son, Leadenhall Street, E.C., of the letter dated the 18th January, addressed to us by the Foreign Office.

We remain, &c.

(Signed) ELLINGER AND CO.

[12407]

No. 31.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received April 10.)

(No. 69.)

(Telegraphic.) R.

St. Petersburg, April 10, 1908.

MY telegram No. 66: Exchange of telegraph lines.

Minister for Foreign Affairs has sent instructions to Russian Minister at Tehran to approach Persian Government in regard to above question, and he concurs with suggestion that the two Representatives should arrange between them the best mode of procedure to adopt.

As to details of transfer he will shortly communicate with me.

(Sent to Tehran.)

[12384]

No. 32.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received April 10.)

(No. 93.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Tehran, April 10, 1908.

TURCO-PERSIAN Frontier Commission and basis of negotiations.

With reference to Mr. Wratislaw's telegram No. 21 of the 29th February, I am assured by Mushir-ed-Dowleh that, with the object of bringing on discussion indicated in the telegram sent to Mr. Wratislaw on the 27th November, 1907 (No. 12), by Sir N. O'Connor, the Persian Commissioner was instructed some days ago to urge upon the Turkish Commissioner in a Memorandum that the basis of negotiation should be the recognition of the neutral zone and the Treaty of Erzeroum.

The Persian Commissioner appears to be inclined to take action first and inform the Consuls after, and generally to act independently of their advice. Mushir-ed-Dowleh has, however, promised that instructions will be sent to him that the Consuls are to be constantly consulted.

Instructions corresponding to those mentioned in the first paragraph of this telegram have been sent to Constantinople to the Persian Ambassador.

[12395]

No. 33.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received April 10.)

(No. 94.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Tehran, April 10, 1908.

SECURITY for subvention to the German School.

I sent details respecting this question under flying seal to St. Petersburg in my despatch No. 53 of the 15th March by last messenger.

Both the Minister for Foreign Affairs and the President of the Assembly intentionally led the Assembly to believe that the Shah would pay the subvention from his privy purse, though, so I am informed, neither of them explicitly said so in so many words.

Would it not be well for me in these circumstances to inform the Persian Government in writing that His Majesty's Government cannot admit any discussion of the conditions attached to their consent to the suspension of the sinking fund, in view of the fact that no reply has been made to our note and no money received? (See my

telegram No. 91 of the 7th April.) And I might add that His Majesty's Government wish the Persian Government to bear in mind that, without their consent the Persian Government cannot charge with any other payment revenues already pledged as security for British loans, and that if the interests of the British Government or of the Imperial Bank of Persia are prejudiced by such a proceeding, the former may have to take steps to safeguard them.

The allusion to the German School subvention will be perfectly understood, and I think it would be better therefore not to mention it expressly (see your telegram No. 75 of the 8th April). Furthermore, M. Bizot's position might be made more difficult if his name were mentioned. It is too early as yet to let the Persian Government understand that he is our instrument; I should therefore prefer to omit all mention of his name.

There is less necessity for the Russians to send in a similar note, as their position in this respect is so much stronger than our own, but I think that M. de Hartwig would agree to do so.

In this connection I should add that M. de Hartwig now desires to establish a branch of the Russian Bank at Kermanshah in order to obtain control of the Kermanshah customs, which form part of the Russian guarantee. These customs receipts would then be paid into the Russian Bank, and the Imperial Bank of Persia, the service of whose loans have recently been secured on the Kermanshah customs (see Sir C. Spring-Rice's telegram No. 279 of the 27th September, 1907) would then have to look elsewhere for its security. This makes an additional reason for warning the Persian Government. M. de Hartwig is of course glad to represent that we shall be enabled to get a better hold on the Southern customs by means of the step which he proposes, although its real reason and object, I have reason to believe, are the pushing of Russian trade at Kermanshah.

In spite of the bad state of affairs of the last three months, the recently made-up customs returns total an increase for 1907-8 of over 100,000*l.*, as compared with the figures for 1906-7.

[12164]

No. 34.

Foreign Office to India Office.

Sir,

Foreign Office, April 10, 1908.

WITH reference to my letter of the 4th instant relative to the conditions of the proposed exchange of telegraph lines in Persia, I am directed by Secretary Sir Edward Grey to transmit to you herewith decyphers of telegrams on the subject from His Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires at Tehran and Ambassador at St. Petersburg.*

It will be within the recollection of Mr. Secretary Morley that the Russian Legation at Tehran, so long ago as July 1907, pressed for the construction of a second line from Tehran to Shadrud, which is now desired by the Persian Government.

Sir E. Grey is not aware that there is at the present time any objection to this plan from the point of view of His Majesty's Government, while both Mr. Marling and the Russian Minister at Tehran consider that the request made by the Persian Government may offer a favourable opportunity for approaching them with a view to obtain their consent to the exchange of the lines.

Sir E. Grey would be glad to receive an expression of Mr. Morley's views on this point.

No step, however, can in any case be taken by the two Representatives at Tehran until the Russian Government have signified their assent to the course proposed to them by His Majesty's Government that the time and manner of approaching the Persian Government on this subject should be left to the Representatives' discretion, and until they have sent instructions to M. de Hartwig in this sense. Sir A. Nicolson has therefore recalled this point to the attention of the Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs.

Sir E. Grey is disposed, with the concurrence of Mr. Morley, to approve the terms of Sir A. Nicolson's communication to M. Isvolsky, as reported in his telegram, and to inform him that His Majesty's Government share his view that no action as to the details of the exchange should be taken at Tehran until the reply of the Russian Government to his Memorandum of the 23rd ultimo has been received.

* Nos. 20 and 27.

[12258]

No. 34^a.*Foreign Office to India Office.*

(Confidential.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, April 10, 1908.

WITH reference to your letter of the 2nd instant on the subject of the lease of land at Mohammerah to Messrs. Wöckhaus, I am directed by Secretary Sir E. Grey to transmit to you the accompanying copy of a telegram which has been received from His Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires at Tehran,* in reply to an inquiry as to whether any further land on the river bank is available.

As you are aware, the yearly rental paid by Messrs. Wöckhaus for a plot of land 70 by 50 metres in extent is approximately 208*l.*

In view of the potential importance of Mohammerah as a railway terminus, I am to inquire whether, in the opinion of Mr. Secretary Morley, instructions should be sent to Mr. Marling to ascertain the terms upon which a lease could be obtained or the right of pre-emption secured.

I am, &c.

(Signed) LOUIS MALLET.

[12551]

No. 35 A.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received April 11.)

(No. 95.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Tehran, April 11, 1908.

ATTITUDE of Persian Government with regard to the protection of Bahreinis.

I would suggest that, to enforce our rights in this matter (see your telegram No. 76 of the 10th April), an island in the Gulf, for preference Kais or Hormuz, might if necessary be occupied.

I duly addressed to the Persian Government a note as authorized in your telegram No. 67 of the 26th March. I have this morning received a reply, stating that "you will admit that the proprietary right of the Persian Government is not a matter to be disputed." The note adds that the Government has sent to Lingah instructions "to do the man justice and to make reparation."

In view of this, I propose to personally give the Minister of Foreign Affairs a strong warning this afternoon that the refusal to recognize our protectorate may entail grave consequences.

[12552]

No. 35 B.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received April 11.)

(No. 96.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Tehran, April 11, 1908.

BAHREIN.

I have warned the Persian Government that I was convinced of the intention of His Majesty's Government to settle the question definitively, and strongly urged on them (see my telegram No. 95 of the 11th April) that compliance on the part of the Persian Government was necessary. A good deal of impression was, I think, produced by my arguments. I think also that, if I were authorized to make the threat suggested in my immediately preceding telegram, the Minister for Foreign Affairs and his colleagues would find the necessary courage to face the Medjliss. At present both he and his colleagues are too much afraid of it to comply with our demand, and defend their conduct before it by explaining the true situation, although Mushir-ed-Dowleh is, I think, perfectly aware that the Persian claim to Bahrein is quite untenable.

I suggested to his Excellency that he should inform me in a note that the local authorities in the Gulf had received the instructions which we desired, but that Persian claims should not be mentioned in it. I could not get him to actually promise to do this, but he promised to consult his colleagues and to send me another reply to my note.

It must at the same time be remembered that, if Mr. Morley agrees to the proposal put forward in my letter of the 7th instant, that neither Powers should retain signallers on the line controlled by the other, it will become necessary to inform the Russian Government that the views set forth in that Memorandum have been, to that extent, modified.

I am accordingly to state that Sir E. Grey hopes to learn Mr. Morley's opinion on this proposal with as little delay as possible.

The last two sentences of Mr. Marling's telegram were, of course, written in ignorance of the suggestion above referred to.

I am, &c.
(Signed) LOUIS MALLET.

[12485]

No. 35.

India Office to Foreign Office.—(Received April 11.)

THE Under-Secretary of State for India presents his compliments to the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and, by direction of Mr. Secretary Morley, forwards herewith, for the information of the Secretary of State, printed copies of the telegram to the Viceroy, dated the 9th instant, on the subject of the exchange of Persian telegraph lines.

India Office, April 10, 1908.

Inclosure in No. 35.

Mr. Morley to Government of India.

Telegraphic.) P.

India Office, April 9, 1908.

PERSIA. Exchange of telegraph lines, and proposal that British signallers at Meshed and Tehran should be retained.

See your Secret letter of the 16th January last.

Presence of British signallers in Russian zone seems likely to be objected to altogether by Russian Government, who will certainly only agree to retention of British signallers at Tehran and Meshed on condition of Russian signaller being retained at Nasratabad. In these circumstances it seems best that retention of British signallers at Tehran and Meshed should not be pressed for. I should be glad to learn your views. It would tend to frustrate objects of policy aimed at by exchange of lines if British signallers were stationed in Russian zone, and *vice versa*, especially if Central Persian line is hereafter linked up with Khaf-Nasratabad line. Possible delays, &c., consequent on our signallers being withdrawn from Tehran and Meshed, seem lesser evil than presence of Russian signallers in our zone.

[12553]

No. 36.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received April 11.)

(No. 97.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Tehran, April 11, 1908.

SUBSIDY to German school.

Please refer to telegram No. 68 from Sir A. Nicolson.

The payment depends on the pressure which can be brought to bear by the German Legation. No payment has yet been made. It may be pretty certainly concluded that nothing will be paid by the Shah. On the other hand, it is very doubtful whether the Minister of Finance will venture to pay, in view of the fact that the President of the Assembly and the Minister for Foreign Affairs made a false impression of the transaction on the Medjliss by their declarations.

[12388]

No. 37.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir A. Nicolson.

(No. 99.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Foreign Office, April 11, 1908.

EXCHANGE of Persian telegraph lines. With reference to your Excellency's despatch No. 153 of the 23rd ultimo.

The question of the retention of signallers has been reconsidered, and the conclusion arrived at that any advantages which we might gain from the presence of an Englishman at Meshed and Tehran would be more than counterbalanced by the drawbacks of having a Russian at Nasratabad. It would, therefore, be preferable in our opinion to dispense with them entirely. The India Office agree with us, but you had better take no action till we receive the views of the Government of India, who are being consulted.

[12407]

No. 38.

Sir Edward Grey to Mr. Marling.

(No. 78.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Foreign Office, April 11, 1908.

WITH reference to telegram No. 69 of the 10th April from St. Petersburg, on the subject of the exchange of Persian telegraph lines:

You may decide what action is to be taken in consultation with your Russian colleague.

[12554]

No. 39.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received April 12.)

(No. 70.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

St. Petersburg, April 12, 1908.

EXCHANGE of telegraphs.
Details of transfer.

As Minister for Foreign Affairs will not, I expect, reply to my Memorandum on the subject for some days, there will be still time before any further action need be taken to receive views of Indian Government (see Foreign Office telegram No. 99 of the 11th instant). I presume, however, that Persian Government can now be approached by M. de Hartwig and Mr. Marling with a view to the former giving its consent to principle of exchange; moreover, especially as M. de Hartwig has been instructed by his Government to take steps in the matter in concert with his British colleague, it would, I submit, be advisable that no delay should be allowed to intervene in that portion of the whole transaction.

(Sent to Tehran.)

[12621]

No. 40.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received April 13.)

(No. 47.)

Sir,

Tehran, March 6, 1908.

WITH reference to your telegram No. 15 of the 11th January, authorizing His Majesty's Consul at Kermanshah to proceed to Kasr-i-Shirin and there to do what he could for the protection of the property of the D'Arcy Oil Syndicate, in connection with the disquieting reports prevalent on that part of the Turco-Persian frontier, I have the honour to transmit herewith copy of a despatch from Captain Haworth reporting on his visit to the oil works and on the present state of affairs there.

I have, &c.

(Signed) CHARLES M. MARLING.

Inclosure in No. 40.

Consul Haworth to Mr. Marling.

(No. 80.)

Sir,

Kasr-i-Shirin, February 20, 1908.

I HAVE the honour to report that the tapur of infantry who arrived at Khanikin on the 13th February came direct from Kerkuk.

It is stated that a few more guns are being sent to Khanikin, but the number is not mentioned.

I visited the Oil Syndicate works on the 17th and 18th February. The Syndicate pay 10 tomans a-month each for eight guards at the works. I found eleven ragged ruffians, mostly half naked, with rifles from which, in the majority of cases, it would have been dangerous to shoot. In one case the stock was only just hanging on to the barrel, while one man was practically stone deaf. I gave Shuja-ul-Mamalek, Chief of the Bajilan, a dressing down on the subject. He was actually paying 1 toman a-month each to the men and keeping 9 tomans himself.

Shuja-ul-Mamalek has also the right of disposing of all the oil at the works, and also the revenue from the salt which is extracted from the water which comes up with the kerosene.

It is stated that the two together bring in an income of more than 200 tomans per mensem.

Khwaja Hanna, the Christian wakil of the Company, a Turk from Khanikin, does not strike me as a very desirable person to be in charge, though no doubt it is difficult to get a better. The post is not an enviable one, especially in the summer. He is, however, undoubtedly intriguing with the Guran tribe to get them placed in charge of the works in place of the Bajilans, and is bound to make mischief.

Shuja-ul-Mamalek promised to keep decent men at the works, and I pointed out to him that it was to his advantage to do so, as the Gurans could guard the place equally as well as he, a change that would mean a great loss to him. He promised that there should be no further cause for complaint, and I hope that matters are settled amicably. Shuja-ul-Mamalek, however, made complaints against Khwaja Hanna, saying he used the men for menial purposes and it was difficult to get decent men to stop. The houses at the works are going to rack and ruin. A small sum in repairs would make a great difference, but no repairs of any sort have been carried out for years past.

It would pay the Company to keep one European at the works and to sell the oil themselves. This would prevent the present waste and ruin of buildings, and would certainly stop the intriguing which is bound to take place with an Oriental in charge.

Even a European with a fortnight's leave in a month would suffice. A man always there alone would probably go off his head, I should imagine.

Daoud Khan, Sardar-i-Muzaffer, Chief of the Kalhars, arrived here to-day with a small escort of 150 sowars.

Mansur-ul-Mulk, Chief of the Gurans, told me he would come to Kasr in a few days.

According to the testimony of General Sir H. Rawlinson, Zohab undoubtedly belongs to the Turks; this, coupled with the fact that they have already intrenched upon country on which they can have no real claim, leads one to suppose that the preparations which they appear to be making will have a definite object.

There is no news from Kurdistan. A much mutilated telegram which I received from my agent there denies that there was any fight at Merivan. On reporting for certain that there had been a battle, I sifted the information very carefully, and had it corroborated in the presence of the Governor before accepting its truth.

The two men I have sent to the Wali of Pusht-i-Kuli's country have not yet returned.

I have, &c.

(Signed) L. HAWORTH.

[12622]

No. 41.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received April 13.)

(No. 48.)

Sir,

Tehran, March 6, 1908.

HAVING seen a statement in the Paris "New York Herald" of the 12th ultimo that Herr Stemrich, the late German Minister, had succeeded in obtaining a concession for a railway from Tehran to Kermanshah, I asked the Minister for Foreign Affairs whether there was any truth in the report. Mushir-ed-Dowleh informed me that there is no foundation whatever for the statement.

I have, &c.
(Signed) CHARLES M. MARLING.

[12623]

No. 42.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received April 13.)

(No. 49.)

Sir,

Tehran, March 7, 1908.

I HAVE the honour to transmit herewith copy of a despatch, transmitted through His Majesty's Consul-General at Bushire, from His Majesty's Vice-Consul at Ahwaz in regard to the posting of the extra Indian guards supplied for the protection of the Oil Syndicate's works.

I have as yet received no report on the result of Mr. Cunningham Craig's investigations into the borings on the Mamatain side, but the fact that Captain Lorimer was able to post the whole of the reinforcing detachment at the Maidan-i-Munaftun camp rather points to the intended abandonment of the former.

It is evident, from the inclosed despatch, that the proof afforded by His Majesty's Government of their determination to protect British subjects and enterprise has produced a most salutary local effect, an effect which, as I had the honour to report in my telegram No. 59 of the 27th ultimo, Captain Lorimer considers liable to be prejudiced by any premature withdrawal of the reinforcements to his escort.

I have, &c.
(Signed) CHARLES M. MARLING.

Inclosure in No. 42.

Captain Lorimer to Major Cox.

(No. 21.)

Sir,

Maidan-i-Munaftun, January 22, 1908.

I HAVE the honour to inform you that I arrived here on the 20th instant, accompanied by Lieutenants Ranking and Wilson, and that I have posted these officers with their guard of twenty men at the scene of work here.

2. In the first case I moved out with the whole guard from Masiri to Mamatain, intending to leave one officer with a detachment at that place, but on arriving there I found that work had been completely stopped, at least for the meantime, and that it was only intended to retain two Europeans there. As, with the cessation of the employment of labour and the purchase of fuel, the likelihood of friction arising is reduced to a minimum, I did not consider myself justified in going counter to the decided opinions which had been expressed of the inadvisability of splitting up the force available into small detachments.

3. Lieutenant Wilson has done a large amount of most valuable survey work since leaving Masiri. To extend the scope of his work, I made a detour via Bagh Malik in coming on here from Mamatain.

The presence of the two officers at one place will make it possible for one officer to devote part of his time to this class of work, the importance of which, in view of the extremely defective state of the existing maps, including the most recently published editions, can scarcely be exaggerated.

4. Throughout the journey, and on various expeditions made during our halt at Mamatain, not a trace of hostility in the attitude of the inhabitants of the country, either towards the Syndicate or ourselves, has been met with.

These people are chiefly Chaharlang, who remain throughout the year in the district, and I have found them quite friendly, in contradistinction to the largely nomadic Haftlang, who have scarcely any intercourse with Europeans, and who are the Bakhtiari I principally see when on my hot-weather tours. These latter, especially those encountered in the habitations on the road, often leave much to be desired in their behaviour.

This is further proof, were such necessary, of the baselessness of the statements of the Khans that the Oil Syndicate do not treat the people of the country properly.

5. Our anxieties in the past have been due to individual evilly disposed Bakhtiari whom, until recently, the Khans have done nothing to restrain, and not to any general sense of hostility, which, however, would easily be excited by scheming persons, as the general character of the people is a compound of insatiable avariciousness and truculence modified by cowardice.

Since the suspension of November instalment and the arrival in the country of the Indian guard a quite phenomenal state of tranquillity has supervened, which I hope will continue to obtain as long as the Indian guard remains here and the policy of boldly resisting the devil is persisted in.

6. I yesterday received a letter from the Shahab-es-Sultaneh and Salar Arfa, who are on their way to Ab-i-Bid, informing me of their intention of paying a visit to Maidan-i-Munaftun to-morrow.

Their visit will doubtless materially develop the situation, and it would be waste of time at the present moment to expatiate on various subjects which will come up for personal discussion with the Khans during the next day or two.

I have, &c.
(Signed) D. L. LORIMER.

[12624]

No. 43.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received April 13.)

(No. 50. Very Confidential.)

Sir,

Tehran, March 9, 1908.

M. ARTER, the representative of Messrs. Ziegler in Tehran, and himself a German, called on me on the 5th instant, and said that Herr Mygind, the correspondent of the "Berliner Tageblatt," had just informed him that the Director of the Imperial Bank of Persia had resigned; he added, as though the connection was obvious, that the same authority had stated that the German Bank would be opened in the autumn or winter.

I am informed that Mr. Rabino's resignation will take effect in six months from the date of tendering it, a period which coincides curiously with the time at which the German Bank is to open its doors.

From what I have since ascertained, it seems that the first person to whom Mr. Rabino communicated his intention to resign was Mr. Priem, whose intimate relations with the German Legation make it practically certain that the information reached Baron von Richthofen without delay.

Mr. Rabino himself informs me that there have been no *pourparlers* between himself and the Germans on the question of his undertaking the management of the German Bank, and the German Minister assured me that, so far as he knew, the only proposals with this object had come from Mr. Rabino himself, and not from the German Legation or from Herr Gutmann.

According to Mr. Rabino, though he was chary of details, the German Bank scheme is to be actively pushed, and will receive most influential backing through the Deutsche Orient Bank and other first rate banking establishments in Germany. On the other hand, I may recall that in an interview with a newspaper correspondent some two months ago, Herr Gutmann stated that the present moment was not a favourable one for inaugurating German enterprise in Persia, and indicated that the opening of the German Bank was for the present postponed.

I have, &c.
(Signed) CHARLES M. MARLING.

[12625]

No. 44.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received April 13.)

(No. 51.)

Sir,

Tehran, March 9, 1908.

I HAVE the honour to transmit herewith copy of a despatch from His Majesty's Consul-General at Bushire in which he submits that it would be of advantage that the rank of Consul should be accorded to M. Chaloin the French Consular Representative at Bushire.

The French Minister, to whom I have communicated the substance of the despatch, is quite in accord with Major Cox' views, and will write to his Government to recommend them for favourable consideration. He points out that his representations would carry much more weight if supported by His Majesty's Embassy in Paris, and I therefore venture to suggest that some unofficial action might be taken with that object.

I have, &c.

(Signed) CHARLES M. MARLING.

Inclosure in No. 44.

Major Cox to Mr. Marling.

Sir,

Bushire, February 11, 1908.

I HAVE the honour to lay the following before you.

The incumbent of the French Vice-Consulate, M. Chaloin, has, except for absence on leave, held his present post for about five years, and I gather from confidences which he has given me in private conversation, that he feels a good deal his juniority in rank to the Representatives of other Powers within his sphere.

This is not unnatural, as neither Great Britain, Russia, nor Germany are represented by Vice-Consuls in these waters. Thus at Bushire the Russian Representative is ordinarily a Consul-General; Dr. Listemann, German Representative, though quite a young man and junior in his service grade, holds local rank as Consul, as also does my first assistant.

All the present incumbents of these posts are considerably younger men than M. Chaloin, who is of middle age.

Of course, France has no great interests here, and M. Chaloin has, presumably, little work, but in the event of international questions arising in connection with quarantine or other subjects the raising of the French appointment at Bushire to Consular rank would tend to throw greater weight into the scale on our side *vis-a-vis* Germany, which might prove advantageous, and if any friendly mention of the subject by yourself or His Majesty's Government were considered feasible and bore fruit the exercise of their good offices would no doubt enhance the existing cordiality between the British and French Consulates and place the incumbent under some obligation to us.

On these two grounds I have ventured to put you in possession of the circumstances.

I have, &c.

(Signed) P. Z. COX, Major,
*British Resident in the Persian Gulf, and His
Britannic Majesty's Consul-General for Fars, &c.*

[12626]

No. 45.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received April 13.)

(No. 52. Confidential.)

Sir,

Tehran, March 9, 1908.

AS I had the honour to report in my telegram No. 67 of the 4th March, I had a long conversation with the new German Minister here on the 3rd instant on the subject of the attitude and policy of the German Legation. Count Quadt began by saying that he

thought that a great deal too much had been made of the supposed attempt of Baron von Richthofen to bring about the substitution of Germans for Belgians in the Customs service; and, to prove that the Belgian Government did not view Baron Richthofen's statements to the Belgian Chargé d'Affaires in the same light as the Russian Minister and myself, he showed me a telegram from Berlin stating that the Belgian Government were grateful to the German Government for a timely and friendly warning. He could, however, assure me that, should the Persian Government make any request at Berlin for the nomination of Customs officials to supersede the Belgians, they would meet with a flat refusal. He (the Minister) thought that during the past three months there had been a great deal of misconception as to Baron von Richthofen's attitude, and this was due to the fact that there were so few opportunities of informal meeting between the foreign Representatives in Tehran, who consequently saw each other but little, so to speak, in office hours. It was to him incredible that, in face of the assurances given by Germany to Great Britain and Russia that Germany had none but purely commercial interests in Persia, and would seek none but commercial ends, the German Chargé d'Affaires should have attempted to play the political rôle attributed to him. The German Government had been much distressed at the repeated complaints made from St. Petersburg and London of Baron von Richthofen's conduct, and had enjoined on him (Count Quadt) to conform strictly to those assurances. This he intended to do to the best of his ability, and he hoped that, to prevent any misunderstanding, I would, whenever any plausible story of alleged German political "intrigue" came to my ears, at once ask him for explanations, which he would be always ready to give. Intrigue and diplomacy were no longer synonymous, and he believed that frank and loyal discussion was nowadays the only possible way of conducting affairs.

I thanked Count Quadt for his frankness and for his assurance that his Government would refuse any application to place Customs officers at the disposal of the Persian Government, and said that nothing would give me greater pleasure than the prospect of cordial and frank relations. I must, however, demur to his views of Baron von Richthofen's conduct, nor could I admit that I had sent to you any reports which were not accurate in substance, for I had always been at the greatest pains to verify my statements. If Baron von Richthofen had not sought to play the rôle attributed to him, why had he sought to justify his actions during the Shah's attempted *coup d'état* in December by asserting, without a shadow of foundation, that the Russian Minister and I had sought to obtain special privileges in return for our efforts at pacification? "Qui s'excuse, s'accuse." No one who had followed events here during the past three months could have the smallest doubts as to the objects of his activity. As for the telegram he had shown me, the simple explanation seemed to me to be that the Belgian Government had taken a tactful way of bringing to the notice of the German Government a disagreeable question which might create a momentary friction between the two countries.

Count Quadt went on to say that the Persians were trying to play their familiar game of playing off one Power against another; they could no longer do so with England and Russia, and so they were trying to use Germany as a set-off against those two Powers. I said that was certainly the case, but I feared I could not acquit Baron von Richthofen of fostering the idea; the possibility of exploiting that idea, under a Ministry of so Germanophil sympathies as the present, had not been lost upon that gentleman, hence my apprehensions of his inducing the Persian Government to commit themselves to a request for German Customs officials.

Count Quadt repeated his assurances on this head, and said, moreover, that he was doing his best to impress on the Persians that Germany would not allow herself to be used as a counterpoise against Great Britain and Russia. He added that he had spoken in a similar strain to the Russian Minister, who had promised, at his request, to telegraph to his Government the substance of the declaration he had made. He begged that I would do the same. He then adverted to the financial situation, and affirmed that if order was to be restored a very considerable foreign loan would be necessary, probably as much as 10,000,000*l.*; but with the lack of security, not only for the service but for the proper employment of the loan, he foresaw some kind of foreign control would be a natural corollary. I said I had no idea what the views of His Majesty's Government on the question of a loan might be, but, personally, I was quite sure they would not care to saddle themselves with a joint responsibility for the administration of Persia. I doubted, moreover, whether Persian vanity could bring itself to accept a loan on condition of effective control, and the most probable solution of the problem seemed to me to be the appointment of foreign advisers recruited in much the same way as are the officials in the Chinese Maritime Customs. It seemed to me, however, premature

to discuss any possibilities of this kind until it was ascertained whether Persia could even find security for the service of a loan.

In introducing this subject Count Quadt may have, of course, only been endeavouring to find out whether His Majesty's Government were disposed to come to the assistance of Persia financially, but his language in speaking of the possibility of foreign control gave me the impression that he looked to some formal international control on which Germany would be officially represented.

The tone of our conversation, which lasted more than an hour, was throughout of the most friendly description.

The Russian Minister tells me that, in his conversation, unfortunately a very hurried one, with the German Minister, Count Quadt had given him exactly the same assurances as to myself. In connection with the question of the Customs officials, M. de Hartwig had laid some stress on the patent efforts of the correspondent of the "Berliner Tageblatt" to impress on public opinion in Germany that the substitution of Germans for Belgians in the Administration was keenly desired by the mass of Persians and by the Persian Government. In reply, Count Quadt had promised to send for Herr Mygind and to administer to him such a *savonnade* as would put an end to press campaigns of the kind directed from Tehran.

M. de Hartwig is by no means reassured by Count Quadt's professions; he is ready enough to believe that the patently active methods of Baron von Richthofen will be abandoned—indeed, they have probably served their purpose—but he is convinced that it will only be the method and not the end that will be changed.

I have, &c.

(Signed) CHARLES M. MARLING.

[12627]

No. 46.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received April 13.)

(No. 53. Confidential.)

Sir,

Tehran, March 15, 1908.

WHEN I saw the Minister for Foreign Affairs on the 11th instant, I adverted to the debate which had taken place in the Assembly on the advisability of engaging foreign advisers in the various branches of the Administration. I told his Excellency frankly that I had pointed out to His Majesty's Government what appeared to me to be the by no means remote possibility that the Persian Government might be induced to turn to Germany for that purpose. There was not the smallest doubt in my mind that the German Legation had been encouraging public opinion to believe that Persia could now play off Germany against Russia and Great Britain, and that with this object the Persian Ministers were ready to listen to every German proposal. Thus they had by a grossly unconstitutional act pledged the Government to pay a subvention to a German school, the subvention to be paid out of the customs receipts; an application had been made by some Persian statesmen to the German Chargé d'Affaires to replace the Belgians now in the Customs Administration by Germans. Taking these two undeniable facts in connection with the notorious efforts of the German Chargé d'Affaires in the crisis of last December, there could be no doubt of the ends which that gentleman had pursued, nor of the willingness of the more influential members of the Persian Ministry to lend themselves to advancing that end.

His Majesty's Government had no desire whatever to obtain for themselves such an influence in Persian internal affairs as would result from the nomination of British officials as advisers to the Persian Administration, but they were absolutely determined that no other Power should occupy that position, and so impressed had they been with the possibility of Persia yielding to German solicitations that I had been authorized to inform his Excellency officially that in the event of the Persian Government deciding to engage foreign advisers His Majesty's Government would expect to be consulted as to the nationality of the officials. However, the Persian Parliament had shelved the proposition for the moment, and the German Minister had given to me and to the Russian Minister the most satisfactory declarations as to his intention scrupulously to observe the assurances of his Government in regard to interference in Persian political questions, so the necessity for a formal intimation of the attitude of His Majesty's Government in this question seemed, for the present, uncalled for. I thought, however, it would be a friendly act on my part to leave his Excellency under no misapprehension as to the manner in which His Majesty's Government would view any proposal to

introduce the nationals of any Great Power to a position of control in Persian affairs, a view which was, moreover, entirely shared by the Russian Government. The policy of the two Governments was one of non-intervention; it was a policy friendly to Persia, and the proof of its friendliness could be seen in the efforts they were making jointly in the frontier question. Persia, however, seemed bent on driving them to abandon that position by encouraging a third Power to step in and secure a political influence which, if they did not seek it for themselves, they could not allow any other Power to acquire. To me the incomprehensible part was that the Persian Government did not realize that the game they wished to play must irritate the two Powers on whose good-will Persia was entirely dependent if she was to obtain any relief from her present financial difficulties. I begged his Excellency not to look on what I had said in the light of a menace; what I wanted him to understand was that the line of policy to which the Persian Government and the Persian people seemed disposed to commit themselves could only lead to one thing, viz., foreign interference in Persian internal affairs, which I presumed was what every Persian wished to avoid.

His Excellency said that he quite understood the situation, as did the other members of the Government. There had never been any idea whatever of seeking for German advisers, and he was ready to give me the same assurances in respect to that question as he had already given me in regard to the Customs officers—that so long as he was in office no attempt would be made by the Persian Government to obtain advisers from that Power. He thought that both I and the Russian Minister had been led by insufficient and inaccurate information to exaggerate the extent to which the Persian Ministers were amenable to German influence. For instance, I had just stated that the subvention to the German school was secured on the customs receipts; this was not the case, and the note in which he had informed the German Legation that the Shah had agreed to grant the subvention contained no mention whatever of such security. After thanking his Excellency for his reassuring declarations, I replied that my authority for my statement was the German Chargé d'Affaires himself. His Excellency said there must have been some misunderstanding, and to convince me he would show the text of the note, which was in Persian, to Abbas Kuli Khan. The next morning Abbas Kuli Khan, by my instructions, called on Mushir-ed-Dowleh and asked to see the note. The document was produced, and the Minister, after reading a few lines, showed signs of confusion, and would evidently have been glad to suppress the remainder. Abbas Kuli Khan, however, insisted on reading it for himself, and found that it was clearly stated that the payment of the subvention was to be made from Customs funds. I have several times before this had reason to suspect his Excellency's statements, but as on this particular occasion Mr. Churchill had the previous evening learnt from a member of the German Legation that the note did contain the condition in question, it seemed to me worth while, by putting Mushir-ed-Dowleh's proffered proof to the test, to let his Excellency see that there were limits to my credulity.

I would willingly attribute his Excellency's misstatement to forgetfulness were it not that, when questioned about the transaction in the Assembly the same afternoon, Mushir-ed-Dowleh left the House under the impression that the subvention was to be given by the Shah out of his Civil List, an arrangement to which no objection could be raised. M. de Hartwig informs me that the Shah's consent to the subvention was obtained by representations that the project had been approved by the Medjliss, and that Mushir-ed-Dowleh was the agent who obtained His Imperial Majesty's signature.

I have ventured to give a somewhat lengthy account of this matter in order to show that Mushir-ed-Dowleh's proneness to evade a disagreeable position by taking refuge in terminological inexactitudes makes it impossible to attach much value to his assurances.

I have, &c.

(Signed) CHARLES M. MARLING.

[12628]

No. 47.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received April 13.)

(No. 54.)

Sir,

Tehran, March 15, 1908.

ON receipt of your telegram No. 56 of the 7th March, authorizing me to consult with the Russian Minister for the purpose of drawing up an identic note intimating to the Persian Government, in the terms agreed on by Sir A. Nicolson and M. Isvolsky,

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that Persia should look to Great Britain and Russia only for assistance in the settlement of her present frontier difficulty with Turkey, I informed M. de Hartwig of the fact, and sent him a French translation of the body of Sir A. Nicolson's telegram No. 39.

M. de Hartwig was at first disposed to draft a note containing merely a bald statement in the sense agreed on at St. Petersburg, but I represented to him that, in my opinion, the note would lose much of its point if no allusion, however remote, was made to the Persian Circular to the Powers on the subject of the Turkish occupation of Soujboulak, and he at once acceded to this view. The note was, as usual, in the Persian language, and I have the honour to transmit herewith a copy of the French draft from which that translation was made.

I have, &c.
(Signed) CHARLES M. MARLING.

Inclosure in No. 47.

Identic Note addressed by the British and Russian Legations to Mushir-ed-Dowleh.

M. le Ministre, *Téhéran, le 12 Mars, 1908.*
EN réponse au télégramme transmis par le Représentant de la Perse à Londres au sujet de l'occupation de Saoudj-Bulagh, j'ai l'honneur, d'ordre de mon Gouvernement, d'adresser à votre Excellence la communication suivante :—

Le Gouvernement de Sa Majesté le Schah se sera convaincu que les démarches effectuées de commun accord par la Russie et la Grande-Bretagne, qui de tout temps ont joué dans les différends Turco-Persans le rôle spécial que leur imposait la marche des événements historiques, viennent d'aboutir aux résultats désirés : Saoudj-Bulagh est évacué par les troupes Ottomanes qui l'avait arbitrairement envahi.

Les deux Puissances médiatrices ayant résolu d'observer aussi à l'avenir la même attitude de bienveillance à l'égard de la Perse, il semble opportun, à l'avantage même de ce pays, que le Gouvernement de Sa Majesté le Schah continue à confier à la Russie et à l'Angleterre la sauvegarde de ses intérêts dans la question de frontière.

Veuillez, &c.
(Signé) CHARLES M. MARLING.

[12631] No. 48.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received April 13.)

(No. 57.) *Tehran, March 18, 1908.*
Sir, WITH reference to my despatch No. 33 of the 26th February, I have the honour to transmit the annexed extract from a report by His Majesty's Consul at Kermanshah, in regard to the state of affairs on the southern section of the Turco-Persian frontier.

Captain Haworth's prudent advice to Zahir-ul-Mulk, Chief of the Zengenehs and Governor of Kermanshah, appears to have produced a good effect, and I have addressed a despatch to that officer approving his language as reported.

I am, &c.
(Signed) CHARLES M. MARLING.

Inclosure in No. 48.

Captain Haworth to Mr. Marling.

(No. 10.) *Kasr-i-Shirin, February 27, 1908.*
(Extract.) DAOUD KHAN (Chief of the Kalhors), when somewhat annoyed, told me that he had told Zahir-ul-Mulk (Commander on the frontier) that he could take Khanikin in a day. Zahir-ul-Mulk immediately said yes, he knew it, but the end of the affair would be bad.

It will thus be seen that, but for restraining influence, there is little doubt that the tribes would bring on war

I have several times impressed on Zahir-ul-Mulk the necessity for understanding that Persia could not in the end compete with Turkey, for more than that it is hopeless to ask them to follow. It was, however, the first time that he acknowledged the truth of what I had said. The same day he told me he knew it was only the fear of England and Russia which prevented Turkey taking any steps it wished to take.

The people of the country constantly ask me why, after the Convention, do we allow the Turks to take Persian territory. One gentleman even went so far as to tell me that we were responsible for Persia's frontier.

On hearing of the collecting of these Persian Chiefs, 1,500 Redifs were called out for Khanikin. Mr Cattersel, returning to-day from Khanikin, to which town he had accompanied M. Deville, tells me that it is full of soldiers, and that it is difficult to obtain accommodation there.

[12632]

No. 49.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received April 13.)

(No. 58.)
Sir,

Tehran, March 18, 1908.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 45 of the 6th instant, I have the honour to transmit herewith copies of further Memoranda which have been exchanged between the Turkish and Persian Frontier Commissioners.

Mohtashem-es-Sultaneh's responsive Memorandum seems effectively to answer the points raised by Taher Pasha.

I have, &c.
(Signed) CHARLES M. MARLING.

Inclosure 1 in No. 49.

Consul-General Wratislaw to Mr. Marling.

(No. 3.)
Sir,

Urmi, February 22, 1908.

WITH reference to my telegram No. 18 of the 19th instant, I have the honour to inclose herewith translations of the second Memoranda exchanged between the Turkish and Persian Frontier Commissions.

I have, &c.
(Signed) A. C. WRATISLAW.

Inclosure 2 in No. 49.

Memoranda exchanged between the Turkish and Persian Frontier Commissioners.

(1.)

(Translation.)

ANSWER, dated the 12th Muharrem, 1326, to the Memorandum presented on the 5th Muharrem, 1326, by the Imperial Persian Commission.

IT is well known that, in the same way as the delimitation of a frontier depends on Treaties, so, too, Treaties will annul and cancel one another according to their dates. But the places where we demand that the unjust interference of certain frontier officials in the name of the Persian Government should be stopped are the Kurds (*sic*) within the Sanjaks of Shehrzur, Kurkuk, Rowanduz, Amadia, Hakkari, Van, and Bayazid. It was necessary for you to show some Treaty giving you the right to interfere in these districts. For the IIIrd Article of the Treaty of 1863 on which you rely concerns the territory and boundary of Suleimanieh, Zohab, and Mohammerah. It is in no way possible that that Article should cover our sanjaks as recited above; it explains Article II of the Treaty. If it had concerned those districts it would have explained and defined their boundaries. Consequently the sentence in your Memorandum to the effect that "in the last Treaty made between the two Powers, on the 16th Jemadi-ul-Akir, 1263, the delimitation of the frontier is

clearly set forth, and if it be examined with the eye of equity there is not the slightest room for doubt," can only refer to the boundary of Mohammerah, Zohab, and Suleimanieh; it cannot be made to include other places. For it is an accepted rule that doubt does not remove certainty. This being so, it is obligatory for the two Powers to prove their right by Treaty. Consequently we are again compelled to renew our demand for an end to be made of your wrongful interference with our tribes and territory in the livas, kazas, nahieh, and villages of Kurdistan from the Sanjak of Bayazid to the extremity of the Sanjak of Suleimanieh, Kotur excepted.

February 2 (15), 1908.

(2.)

(Translation.)

REPLY, dated the 14th Muharrem, 1326, to the Memorandum of the Imperial Ottoman Commission dated the 12th Muharrem, 1326.

THE Ottoman Commission limit the IIIrd Article of the 1863 Treaty to the territory and boundary of Suleimanieh, Zohab, and Mohammerah, and consider it to be the explanation of Article II of the same Treaty. Having confidence in the equity of the Commission, and knowing that this declaration cannot be due to a desire to depart from justice, I am compelled to attribute it to a miscomprehension, and consequently I invite the Ottoman Commission to again call to mind the IInd and IIrd Articles of the aforesaid Treaty. In Treaties which are the source of conduct of two States, redundant and ineffective expressions are always avoided.

Seeing that in the IInd Article of the Treaty of 1863 all the questions relating to Suleimanieh, Zohab, and Mohammerah are settled in a clear and explicit manner, there is no room for the interpretation that an abridged Article should be taken as explaining so categorical and expanded an Article. Besides this, there is no ambiguity or hesitation in the phraseology of the IIIrd Article, and it is obvious that the two Powers desired to completely wind up the claims they had on one another. Thus by this present Treaty the two Contracting Parties state explicitly that they abandon their other territorial claims. When they have specially mentioned a plain undertaking in phraseology free from ambiguity, to consider as mysterious an Article which is itself fundamental in the matter of abandoning territorial claims and to lay down that it is merely an explanation of the previous Article can be made to coincide with no rule.

We were waiting for an explanation of the proofs of your Government's right in the matter of the encroachments of your officials on the territory and boundaries of Baneh, Serdesht, Lahijan, Ushnu, Mergaver, Dasht, Tergaver, Baradost, and elsewhere which belong to Persia, in order to complete your first Memorandum in view of the sacred Treaty which at present exists between the two Powers. But not only have you furnished no valid proofs, but you change the question and demand proofs from us, asserting that Persia has interfered with Kerkuk, Rowanduz, Amadia, Hakkiari, Van, and Bayazid. In consequence of this declaration, the Persian Commission is obliged with great respect to ask from your honourable Commission proofs on two points instead of one: first, the unjustified aggression of Turkey on the boundaries of the territory of provinces in the possession of Persia from of old; and, secondly, the matter of Persian interference in the above-named districts as mentioned in your Memorandum. In this we expect from the equity of your honourable Commission that the Treaty which is so plain between the States will not be removed from the eye of your attention and conscience.

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No. 50.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received April 13.)

(No. 60.)

Sir,

Tehran, March 19, 1908.

WITH reference to my telegram No. 62 of the 29th ultimo, I have the honour to transmit the accompanying copy of a letter addressed to me by the Persian Minister for Foreign Affairs in reply to a letter announcing the evacuation of Soujboulak, in which

his Excellency gives expression to the gratitude of his Government for the good offices of His Majesty's Government in the matter of the Turco-Persian frontier dispute.

I have, &c.

(Signed) CHARLES M. MARLING.

Inclosure in No. 50.

Mushir-ed-Dowleh to Mr. Marling.

Cher M. Marling,

Téhéran, le 1^{er} Mars, 1908.

LA lettre que vous avez bien voulu m'adresser, en date d'hier, m'a fait grand plaisir, et je vous remercie des nouvelles que vous m'y faites parvenir.

J'ai pris connaissance du fait que vous m'annoncez en premier lieu, et j'en ai télégraphié la portée à Mohtechem-es-Sultaneh.

L'heureuse nouvelle de l'évacuation de Saoudj-Bulagh que vous me communiquez est conforme aux télégrammes que j'ai reçus de son Altesse le Prince Firman Firma. Je saisis cette occasion pour vous renouveler l'expression de la vive reconnaissance du Gouvernement Impérial pour les bons offices du Gouvernement de Sa Majesté Britannique. Le Gouvernement Persan y voit, avec joie, une nouvelle preuve de l'amitié inaltérable et des relations cordiales qui unissent si heureusement les deux États.

Agréer, &c.

Mushir-ed-Dowleh,

(Signé) M. HASSAN KHAN.

[12635]

No. 51.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received April 13.)

(No. 61.)

Sir,

Tehran, March 19, 1908.

I HAVE the honour to quote, for your information, the following extract from the weekly diary of His Majesty's Consul at Mohammerah:—

"February 13.—A new twin screw steamer, in sections, was landed from steam-ship "Tabaristan," for Nassery Company (Hajji Muin-et-Tujjar), shipped from Manchester. She is for use on the Upper Karun."

Should this steamer establish a regular service on the Upper Karun, in competition with the steam-ship "Shushan," a somewhat antiquated stern-wheeler, it can hardly be doubted that the deficit on the working expenses of the latter vessel will be even greater than in previous years, and that the difficulty in recovering the amount of that deficit from the Persian Government will be, if possible, increased.

I have, &c.

(Signed) CHARLES M. MARLING.

[12636]

No. 52.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received April 13.)

(No. 62.)

Sir,

Tehran, March 21, 1908.

WITH reference to my telegram No. 59 of the 27th ultimo, I have the honour to report that the question of the instalments due to the Bakhtiara Khans from the Oil Syndicate in November and February last has now been settled. The November instalment of 24,500 krans has been paid into the Chiefs' account at the Ispahan Bank; of the February instalment of 25,250 krans, the sum of krans 12,465:14 has been paid by His Majesty's Vice-Consul to Messrs. Lynch on account, against their road construction claim, while the balance of krans 12,784:86 has been retained by Captain Lorimer against the Oil Syndicate's claims for compensation.

Captain Lorimer, as I had the honour to report in my telegram above referred to, considers it inadvisable to endeavour to obtain the Khans' assent to the payment of the

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guards by the Syndicate, and in view of his opinion, I have agreed not to press the proposal.

I have, &c.
(Signed) CHARLES M. MARLING.

[12637]

No. 53.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received April 13.)

(No. 63.)

Sir,

Tehran, March 24, 1908.

I HAVE the honour to transmit herewith copy of a Memorandum compiled by M. Chiari, Customs Director at Urumia, and forwarded to me through His Majesty's Consulate-General at Tabreez, giving an interesting account of the origin and development of the present phase of the Turco-Persian frontier dispute on the borders of Azerbaijan.

I have, &c.
(Signed) CHARLES M. MARLING.

Inclosure in No. 53.

Report furnished by M. Ch. Chiari, Director of the Customs at Urumia, to M. Molitor, Director of Customs at Azerbaijan, and communicated by latter to Vice-Consul Stevens.

(Confidentiel.)

M. le Directeur des Douanes à Tauris,

Urumia, le 31 Décembre, 1907.

L'HISTOIRE de l'invasion Turque dans les régions d'Urumia et de Saoujboulak peut se diviser, suivant l'ordre chronologique, en cinq parties comprises dans un espace de sept années.

1. Occupation de Sero et Sardik.
2. Invasion de Lahidjan.
3. Agression de zaptiehs Turcs, aidés par les domestiques du Sheikh Sadik à Mergavar, Dasht, et Tergavar.
4. Occupation de Sardasht par les Kurdes poushtdaris et les troupes régulières Ottomanes.
5. Bombardement du camp Persan à Touli et invasion de Mergavar, Dasht et Tergavar, Bradost et Ushnu par les troupes régulières Ottomanes.

1. Sero et Sardik sont deux petits villages de la plaine de Bradost, en partie propriété du Sheikh de Noochea. Noochea est une petite province renommée par ses tabacs, au sud-ouest d'Urumia, sur le territoire Turc au-delà des montagnes de Mergavar et de Dasht; le chef-lieu est une petite ville appelée Neri, où habite le Sheikh. Il y a vingt-sept années le Sheikh de Noochea s'appelait Obeid-Ullah, mais ayant fait une invasion en Perse, il fut relégué à Constantinople, et son fils Sadik lui succéda. C'est à Sheikh Sadik, homme très puissant, aussi riche que rusé, qui joua un grand rôle dans l'occupation Turque du territoire de la région d'Urumia. Les villages de Sero et Sardik se trouvent à 8 farsakhs à l'ouest de la ville d'Urumia, à l'entrée d'une vallée qui conduit à la ville Turque de Badjergha et de là à Dezza, chef-lieu de la plaine des Ghiavers. Ces villages étaient toujours considérés comme faisant partie de l'Empire Persan. Il y a sept années à peu près, un Kurde—je ne sais pas quel crime accompli en Turquie—étant poursuivi par la police, prit la fuite et vint se réfugier à Sero. Les autorités de Badjergha écrivirent officiellement au Gouverneur d'Urumia pour obtenir l'extradition du coupable, le Gouverneur répondit que cette affaire ne dépendait pas de lui, Sero étant territoire Turc. Le Sheikh de Noochea, profitant de l'occasion, y fit bâtir en 1903 une petite forteresse qui fut occupée d'abord par Mohammed Agha, père du fameux Jaffer Agha, et ensuite par une petite garnison Turque. Il y a eu après beaucoup de pourparlers sur place, entre les autorités d'Urumia, le Sheikh, et les autorités Ottomanes, mais le résultat est que la garnison reste toujours à Sero, considéré comme village Turc. Ce fut le premier pas.

2. Au sud-ouest et ouest de Saoujboulak se trouve la tribu Kurde, aussi puissante que sauvage, dite des Mangours, qui prétendent descendre d'une ancienne famille Arménienne-Mangoun. Elle habite les vallées aux montagnes très fertiles en pâturage qui se trouvent depuis une heure de la ville de Saoujboulak jusqu'aux frontières de Lahidjan d'un côté et le pays des Gobrics de l'autre.

Parmi ces grandes tribus Kurdes il y a toujours plusieurs Chefs entre eux souvent rivaux et dont la puissance dépend du nombre plus ou moins grand qu'ils ont de parents, de richesses et de domestiques armés. Un de ces Chefs est toujours choisi officiellement par le Gouverneur de la région de Saoujboulak et chargé de ramasser les impôts; l'élu devient ainsi le plus respecté et le plus autoritaire.

Jusqu'à 1903, le Chef des Mangours était un certain Bayazid Agha, ou Beyz Agha, homme très vaillant et de noble origine, autant que peut l'être un Kurde. Mais il fut remplacé par un autre Chef appelé Bapira Agha, fils de Hamzah Agha; ce même Hamzeh Agha, qui commandait les troupes de Sheikh Obeid-Ullah lorsque que celui-ci envahit la Perse et dévasta les régions d'Urumia, Saoujboulak, et Miandoab, et qui fut tué par l'Amir-i-Nazim de Tauris. Beyz Agha, comme il dit, se voyant préféré le fils d'un traître, froissé dans son amour-propre quitta, la Perse avec tous ses hommes, et passa en Turquie.

Ce fut une *rava avis* qui venait volontairement se poser sur le sol Turc et dont le Gouvernement profita. En effet Beyz Agha fut reçu par les autorités avec honneur; on lui fixa une pension mensuelle et on lui donna le titre de Pacha. Celui-ci, d'accord avec Mohammed Agha, Chef de Mamesh, fit comprendre, on dit, au Vali de Mossoul que Lahidjan était territoire Turc qu'il fallait occuper. Le prétexte d'une invasion *manu militari* se présente avec la construction de la douane, construction ordonnée par M. Leleux.

Lahidjan, dont le chef-lieu est Passva, à 8 farsakhs à l'ouest de Saoujboulak, est une région renommée par ses bestiaux et l'excellente qualité de ses fromages; elle a une largeur de 7 farsakhs sur 14 de longueur et peuplée par les Kurdes, Pirans et Mamesh. M. Leleux, dans son inspection au mois d'Avril 1905, visita Lahidjan, donna les ordres nécessaires et fixa la place pour le bâtiment de la douane. Cette place était sur le penchant du col de Kalechinkia, qui sépare géographiquement la Perse de la Turquie et fait partie du terrain du village de Tamartchian. M. Leleux rentra à Urumia, Raffet Khan, Directeur du Bureau, et Mohammed Amin Agha, Chef des Pirans, lui écrivirent en disant que la place fixée n'était pas favorable à la construction à cause du manque d'eau et de pierres et à cause de la grande quantité de neige qui tombe en hiver; on recula alors l'emplacement de plus de 3,000 mètres vers Tamartchian et on commença le bâtiment.

Assurer maintenant que l'emplacement de la douane était sur le territoire Turc "d'après la frontière admise depuis la Commission d'Erzeroum en 1836," c'est absurde, car (1) le village de Tamartchian est un des nombreux villages de Lahidjan, de ce Lahidjan que tous les géographes admettent comme territoire Persan, séparé de la Turquie par les hautes montagnes et frontières naturelles et saillantes des deux Empires; (2) le village de Tamartchian a toujours payé les impôts au Gouvernement Persan; (3) Mohammed Emin Agha, garde-frontières et Chef des Pirans qui se trouvent en Perse et en Turquie, reconnaît lui-même que Tamartchian et ses alentours appartiennent à la Perse, cela est visible par une lettre qu'il a écrite à M. Leleux et qui se trouve dans les archives de mon bureau; (4) à 3 farsakhs de Tamartchian de l'autre côté du col de Kalechinkia, c'est-à-dire en Turquie, se trouve le village de Sinvé, habité par un fameux Sheikh Kiamal, vénéré par tous les Pirans. Comme ceux-ci chaque année devaient aller en pèlerinage chez lui, et comme le Gouvernement Turc exigeait les passeports des gens de Lahidjan, Tamartchian compris, pour ne pas imposer aux Pirans cette lourde dépense, Sheikh Kiamal venait lui-même en territoire Persan et se fixait dans les environs de Tamartchian avec ses tentes; (5) Rashid-ul-Mulk, personnage très habile et très au courant de la région de Saoujboulak qu'il gouvernait, écrivait à M. Leleux les mots suivants:—

"J'ai de nouveau télégraphié que l'endroit où l'on bâtit la douane est territoire de Sa Majesté Impériale le Schah; si on refuse la permission de continuer la construction... les droits de l'Empire seront lésés."

C'est vers le 7 Seratan, 1905, que commença la construction du bâtiment.

La première alerte arriva du Gouverneur Turc de Rowandouz, chez lequel se trouvait Beyz Agha. Le Gouverneur écrivait une lettre au Sheikh Kiamal en lui disant avoir entendu que sur le col de Kalechinkia on devait bâtir une douane; la construction commencée il fallait l'en avertir et il enverrait des soldats pour la démolir. En effet,

vers le 17 Août, 1905, Abdul Rahman Bimbashi, à la tête de 40 Kurdes Mangour et 40 cavaliers Turcs, entra en Perse et arrêta la construction du bâtiment, en emprisonnant le Directeur Raffet Khan.

Rashid-ul-Mulk, Gouverneur de Saoujboulak, écrivait aussitôt à Mohammed Emin Agha et autres Chefs que, si les Turcs ne quittaient pas le territoire en vingt-quatre heures, ils devaient être considérés comme prisonniers de guerre.

Abdul Rahman poussa sa colonne jusqu'au village de Ushnureng, près de Passva, où il se trouva en face de Kerreni Agha, fils d'Emir-el-Ashair, Mamesh, à présent défunt, qui lui fit connaître qu'il ne pouvait pas avancer et lui intima de retourner en Turquie. Il se retira à Zinveh chez le Sheikh Kiamal, en attendant des secours. En ce temps, ayant attiré de son côté Mohammed Emin Agha et autres Chefs, il entra de nouveau en Perse vers la fin de Septembre avec Izzetullah Bey, colonel, Abdullah Bey Caïmacan, quelques tabours et quelques pièces d'artillerie. Les Turcs s'installèrent à Passva, qu'ils gardent jusqu'à présent.

3. Le contrecoup de cette occupation ne manqua pas de se faire bientôt sentir dans la région d'Urumiah, aux frontières de laquelle nous avons les bureaux de Mergavar, Djerim, Erzini et Bradost.

Je crois qu'il serait plus logique de les appeler bureaux de Mergavar, Dasht, Tergavar et Bradost, car Djerim est un village de la petite province de Dasht, Erzini un village de la province de Tergavar, et Mergavar et Bradost sont en elles-mêmes des petites provinces. A Mergavar le bureau se trouvait au village de Nerki, et à Bradost au village de Behic.

Mergavar, à l'est et à 5 farsakhs d'Urumiah, est une plaine habitée par les Kurdes Harkis, qui ont pour Chef Kerim Khan.

Dasht, au sud-ouest et à 4 farsakhs d'Urumiah, est habitée par des Kurdes dits Begzadehs et des Chaldéens Nestoriens.

Déjà au mois de Septembre 1907 nos bureaux frontières étaient attaqués souvent par les Kurdes, sujets Ottomans surtout. Au mois de Février 1906, le Directeur de Mergavar signalait la présence d'émissaires Turcs et de Sheikh Sadik parmi les Harkis, qui ne voulaient à la fin plus écouter et être soumis à Kerim Khan, fidèle à la Perse. Le 30 Avril, 1906, un certain nombre de zaptiehs, aidés par les domestiques du Sheikh, entraient à Mergavar, chassaient les employés de la douane, et ramassaient les impôts.

Le 28 Février de la même année un certain Ibrahim Bey avec 30 soldats et autant d'hommes du Sheikh entra à Djerim, déchirait le drapeau de la douane, et chassait les employés.

Le 27 Avril, 1906, le Directeur d'Erzini signalait l'arrivée de Kiazim Bey avec 40 soldats venus de Sero. Ils inspectèrent Tergavar, en poussant jusqu'au village de Khalkhour, à 2 farsakhs d'Urumiah, village dans lequel les Turcs ont installé dernièrement la douane. Kiazim Bey retourna ensuite le 1^{er} Juin, en chassant le Directeur et les employés de la douane.

A plusieurs reprises les employés de Bradost furent chassés de Behic, surtout le 17 Septembre, 1906; faisant alors fonction d'inspecteur, je suis allé les rétablir à leurs postes, mais le 13 Mai, 1907, ils furent définitivement chassés et rentrèrent à Urumiah.

4. Des montagnes arides de Bradost, pour suivre l'ordre chronologique des événements, il faut vous transporter maintenant, M. le Directeur Provincial, dans ce pays si beau et si riche en forêts et en mines, qui longe la Rivière de Kelass au midi et aux points extrêmes de votre province, habitée par les Kurdes Melkaris et appelé le pays de Sardesht, vraie Suisse ou Italie de l'Azerbaïdjan. Dans ma dernière inspection, malgré la défense du Gouverneur et du Directeur de Saoujboulak, abandonné au commencement de la route par une partie de cavaliers qui m'accompagnaient, après avoir traversé non sans danger le pays des Mangours et des Gobries, j'entrai le 29 Juin, 1907, à Sardesht, où je trouvai un certain Karani Agha, Chef de la tribu des Poushdériens, sujets Ottomans.

Ce grossier personnage m'envoya aussitôt l'ordre de quitter, disait-il, le territoire Turc, me menaçant de me faire sortir par force, et comme il comprit que ses menaces ne m'avaient pas du tout effrayé, il se borna à me dire qu'il aurait écrit au Ferik Pacha, de Lahidjan, duquel il attendait des ordres. Je constatai, en effet, que cet homme correspondait avec le Ferik, mais avant l'arrivée de la réponse j'avais déjà quitté le pays. Les soldats Turcs se trouvaient pourtant à deux heures au nord-ouest de Sardesht, occupés à extraire du minerai d'or des riches mines du village d'Agalan. Un mois après mon inspection à Sardesht les troupes régulières Ottomanes y faisaient leur entrée. De retour à Urumiah, je passais en côtoyant Lahidjan par Ushnu; je trouvais en route Partew Pacha, qui inspectait de loin la plaine de Souldouz et environs et, soit dans les Mamashis,

soit dans les zarrahs d'Ushnu, j'ai pu constater l'influence produite en eux par les émissaires du Gouvernement Ottoman, dont la politique a toujours consisté à s'attirer d'abord la bienveillance et l'appui des tribus nomades et ensuite à intervenir officiellement.

5. Les Begzadehs de Dasht, accusés d'avoir assassiné en 1904 le missionnaire Laboree, sujet des États-Unis, étaient devenus très hostiles au Gouvernement Persan, qui cherchait à les punir. Il n'y avait aucune borne à leurs pillages et meurtres. La population d'Urumiah, fatiguée, demanda et obtint d'envoyer une armée sous les ordres de Majd-es-Saltaneh pour punir ces Dashtis, et leur faire payer aussi la somme que le Gouvernement Américain demandait. Ceux-ci, à l'approche des soldats Persans, se retirèrent sur les montagnes escarpées de Dasht où le canon ne pouvait les atteindre. Les pourparlers commencèrent ainsi entre le camp et les Kurdes. Mais ceux-ci d'un autre côté entretenaient des relations avec les autorités Ottomanes, leur faisant comprendre qu'ils étaient innocents et injustement persécutés par les Persans, leurs ennemis de religion, les Kurdes étant Sunnis comme les Ottomans. Ils imploraient en même temps le secours des armées Turques. Le 21 Juillet, 1907, ayant reçu l'ordre de la Direction Provinciale de rétablir le poste-frontière, je me rendis au camp, de là à Erzini et à Bradost. En allant à Erzini je passais par un village appelé Khanié, à deux et demi heures du camp. Là je trouvais réunis tous les Dashtis, et en allant aussi à Bradost je rencontrais une vingtaine de cavaliers Turcs allant à Khanié, ce qui me confirma dans l'idée que j'avais que les Dashtis entretenaient des relations avec les Ottomans. Arrivé le 24 Juillet à Bradost, j'apprenais que six canons avec quatre tabours partaient de Badjergha pour être le 30 du même mois à Mergavar. En effet, le 1^{er} Août les troupes Turques venant de Mergavar bombardèrent le camp Persan qui se trouvait dans le village de Touli à Dasht, et prenaient possession de Mergavar, Dasht, Tergavar, et Bradost; les employés de ces deux derniers bureaux, nouvellement réorganisés, rentrèrent en ville.

Le 22 Octobre, 1907, le Directeur d'Ushnu devait aussi quitter son poste. Le local de la douane était occupé par les Turcs. L'installation de douaniers dans le village de Kalkhour, à deux heures de la ville d'Urumiah, est le dernier fait de l'occupation Ottomane. L'entrée des tribus Mangours à Saoujboulak est peut-être le préliminaire d'une occupation par les armées Turques, à moins que la Commission Persane ne fasse les remontrances nécessaires à la Commission Turque. Les pourparlers entre les membres de ces deux Commissions ont déjà commencé par écrit; on espère aussi qu'ils commenceront bientôt de vive voix dans Urumiah ou ses environs.

Le Directeur Int. des Douanes,
(Signé) CH. CHIARI.

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No. 54.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received April 13.)

(No. 64. Confidential.)

Sir,

Tehran, March 24, 1908.

I HAVE the honour to transmit herewith a Memorandum prepared by Mr. Loraine pointing out the desirability of settling definitely the whole question of Messrs. Lynch's claims against the Bakhtiari Khans, and suggesting that the present conjuncture may perhaps offer a suitable occasion for the purpose. The Memorandum gives so lucid an exposition of the two points at issue—viz., (1) that Messrs. Lynch are entitled to claim 12 per cent. on arrears instead of 6 per cent.; and (2) that the firm should be recouped the 3,000*l.* expended in the original construction of the road in excess of the estimate of 5,500*l.* accepted by the Khans—that further explanation would be useless. But I would venture to express the opinion that, as regards (1), 12 per cent. is so universally recognized as being the ordinary and moderate rate of interest in this country, that in reducing the rate to 6 per cent. an excessive regard was shown to the Khans, and one which was probably interpreted as weakness; while as regards (2) there is little doubt that the estimate of 5,500*l.* was communicated to the Khans without proper authority having been given by Messrs. Lynch to their agent to quote it as a final and definite figure. Messrs. Lynch would therefore appear to have strong moral grounds for claiming compensation on both, but more especially on the second of these counts; and the responsibility for the

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loss to the firm lies very close to the door of the Legation. But, without the assistance of His Majesty's Legation, Messrs. Lynch cannot press their claims against the Khans from whom the compensation is perhaps in equity due; and on the other hand the Legation, by its past action, is precluded from taking action except at the price of losing the confidence of the Khans.

In these circumstances I submit that the solution suggested by Mr. Loraine, viz., that in consideration for the claim for the higher rate of interest being dropped Messrs. Lynch shall receive the 3,000*l.* claimed by them under the second heading, the funds to be supplied from Imperial and Indian sources, is as favourable as can be found. Taking the two points on their merits, the proposed compromise might even be judged to be unjust to Messrs. Lynch—it will assuredly be so considered by them; but, on the other hand, they cannot recover from the Khans, and are, indeed, virtually obliged to accept any offer which His Majesty's Government may see fit to make them. Some consideration is, however, due to them for the work they have done in opening up the Ahwaz route, but I venture to think that the sacrifice which I suggest that His Majesty's Government should accept to settle the above claims will fully discharge the debt of gratitude we may owe to the firm in question. In this connection I take leave to refer you to Captain Lorimer's despatches Nos. 672 and 678 of the 4th and 11th December, 1907, respectively (inclosed in Sir C. Spring-Rice's despatch No. 10 of the 12th February, 1907), in which the former animadverted with some severity on the lack of energy and enterprise displayed by Messrs. Lynch in developing their business in these regions. Similar comments have more than once been made to me of late—notably by the Russian Minister and the Administrator of Customs—which seem to show that the general opinion in Persia is that Messrs. Lynch have failed to make adequate use of their opportunities. It is hardly necessary for me to point out that so long as Messrs. Lynch are in a position to complain that their claims for sums expended are ignored by His Majesty's Government it is impossible to draw their attention to their short-comings with any force, a course which is most desirable if, in the face of threatening German competition, we are to retain the supremacy of our commercial influence in South-Western Persia.

I have, &c.

(Signed) CHARLES M. MARLING.

Inclosure in No. 54.

Memorandum by Mr. Loraine on Messrs. Lynch's Claims against the Bakhtiari Khans in respect of the Construction of the Ahwaz-Ispahan Road.

AS reported in Mr. Marling's despatch No. 62 of the 21st March, the Bakhtiari Khans have made a further payment on account of about 12,500 krans against this claim. There is some reason to hope that, in the present temper of the Khans, the claim (see Mr. Marling's despatch No. 12 of the 27th January last) will be settled in full. It would not do to count upon such an eventuality, but it is possible, in view of the Khans' assurances.

The moment, therefore, seems not inopportune for raising the whole question of the Khans' indebtedness to Messrs. Lynch.

Let us suppose that the present claim is fully met. Are we any nearer to a conclusion satisfactory to all parties? It would appear that we are not. Messrs. Lynch are more than likely to refuse a receipt in full, on the grounds that they have abandoned their claim neither to 12 per cent. interest on overdue payments nor to the 3,000*l.* over and above the estimate given by Mr. Taylor of 5,500*l.* Should Messrs. Lynch take this line it would place the Legation in an unfortunate position *vis-à-vis* the Khans, for the claims have been presented with its authority and by a Consular officer. If, therefore, the Khans meet them they will be disagreeably surprised, and with some justice, if they are not given a discharge in full. They will complain to the Legation, and their complaint will be, in equity, unanswerable.

It is therefore most desirable that a definite agreement should be reached with Messrs. Lynch in order to forestall the possibility of a situation such as I have outlined above—a situation which could not fail to react unfavourably upon our general relations with the Chiefs and consequently upon the interests of the Oil Syndicate.

Messrs. Lynch's contentions are, I understand, briefly:—

1. That 12 per cent. is the usual rate in Persia in similar circumstances. This statement, as far as it goes, is perfectly correct, and in the absence of any reference in their Agreement with the Khans to a rate of interest other than that on capital expenditure they are on fairly strong ground.

2. That the estimate of 5,500*l.* was a figure mentioned in an unguarded moment by Mr. Taylor, and one which he was not authorized by his principals to quote (see Persian Transport Company to Foreign Office, December 8, 1904); the Company, therefore, decline to be committed by his statement. In this case they are technically in a very weak position. His Majesty's Government have decided to disallow the claim, and the Legation, in its capacity of impartial intermediary between the Company and the Khans, has not been able to press on the latter a claim which they repudiate with some justification.

There is, however, no doubt whatever that the expense has actually been incurred by the Company, and that the 3,000*l.*, plus interest, will have to be written off as a clear loss unless payment is made from some other quarter. The road has undoubtedly been of value to British interests, and though His Majesty's Government can be held by no obligation to indemnify the Company for their loss, to grant compensation, as an act of grace, and as a recognition of the firm's work as pioneers of British enterprise in a region where the extension of British influence was politically desirable, would create a most favourable impression, and lay the spectre of a question which may easily prove a fruitful source of friction in the future.

I am able to state that Captain Lorimer concurs in this view.

The situation then appears, from the information available at this Legation, to be that, on the one hand, Messrs. Lynch maintain their claims on the two points to which I have alluded; on the other, that His Majesty's Government are averse from abandoning their rulings on those two points.

It would seem that nothing less than a complete reconsideration of the questions at issue is likely to reconcile the two points of view.

Local considerations, as I have endeavoured to show above, strongly indicate the desirability of such a reconciliation.

I venture to suggest, with all due respect, a basis upon which a compromise might be effected:—

1. Messrs. Lynch to abandon their claim to interest at the rate of 12 per cent. on overdue sums.

2. That the sum of 3,000*l.* be paid to Messrs. Lynch, as an act of grace, from Imperial funds, the British and Indian Governments each contributing a moiety.

3. That Messrs. Lynch, in that case, abandon any claim for interest on the 3,000*l.*

4. That Messrs. Lynch undertake to give the Bakhtiari Khans a discharge in full for all fully met claims as made out on the now established basis, and as presented to them by the competent Consular officer, under instructions from this Legation.

(Signed) PERCY L. LORAINÉ.

Tehran, March 22, 1908.

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No. 55.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received April 13.)

(No. 65.)

Sir,

Tehran, March 24, 1908.

I HAVE the honour to report that the French Financial Adviser arrived in Tehran on the 22nd instant, and was brought to call on me by the French Minister the following day. He had already been taken to see the Russian Minister, who has since told me that he was very favourably impressed by M. Bizot.

M. de Hartwig said that he had received a copy of the "lettre de service" furnished to M. Bizot by the French Minister of Finance, and that it was in every way satisfactory. By its terms M. Bizot is officially attached to the French Legation, and is further instructed to consult the British and Russian Representatives on all questions.

M. de la Martinière would naturally have presented M. Bizot to the Persian

Ministers for Foreign Affairs and Finance before coming to M. de Hartwig and myself, but their Excellencies were unable to receive official visits on account of the religious mourning of the "Arbaain."

I have, &c.
(Signed) CHARLES M. MARLING.

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No. 56.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received April 13.)

(No. 66.)

Sir,

Tehran, March 24, 1908.

HAJI MUIN-ET-TUJJAR called recently at the Legation and asked for explanations on certain points of Messrs. Ellinger's proposal for the formation of a Company to work his Concession of the red oxide mines on Hormuz Island.

I believe that I was able to make the main lines of the proposal clear to him, but there were two questions on which I could not satisfy him, viz., whether it could not be arranged that the debentures could be paid off progressively instead of at the fixed date, 31st December, 1919, and, secondly, whether the "purchase money and shares," of which Messrs. Ellinger are to take 10 per cent. in cash and shares, include, besides the 50,000*l.* debentures and the 25,000*l.* ordinary shares, the 10,000*l.* 8 per cent. preference shares. Muin-et-Tujjar said he had already written to Messrs. Ellinger on these points.

I did not gather from our interview that the Muin is by any means eager to come to an arrangement of the kind suggested; not that he appears to be discontented with the terms, but because he fears that, by converting his Concession into a British Company, he will be placing himself in the power of this Legation, and that we should be able to bring pressure to bear on him in other questions where his interests conflict with those of British subjects, as, for instance, those of Messrs. Lynch. For a Persian, of course, such a point of view is quite natural, and it is difficult to persuade them that His Majesty's Government are not in the habit of using methods of this kind, and it is unfortunately the fact that there are half-a-dozen cases in the settlement of which this Legation finds itself opposed by the Muin. I told him that once the Company was formed, the Legation would be legally bound to give it its best protection, and that so long as there were British shareholders in the concern he could trust them at all events to see that their interests were properly cared for. He had had dealings for many years with Messrs. Ellinger, and, if he had the same confidence in them that they reposed in him, he need feel no uneasiness, but that they would safeguard their joint interests to the best of their ability, and see that the concern obtained the assistance and protection to which, as a British Company, it would be entitled at the hands of His Majesty's Government.

As I said before, Muin-et-Tujjar seems fairly contented with the terms offered, and, if Messrs. Ellinger are ready to satisfy him on the two points mentioned in the earlier part of this despatch, I believe that the best chance of bringing him to enter into the combination will be to persuade him that he can count on the fullest measure of our support and that we shall not and cannot, in respect of other questions, make any improper use of the position of dependency on us in which he will be placed as regards the Oxide Company.

From what he has told Abbas Kuli Khan, there can be no doubt that Muin-et-Tujjar is thinking of some similar arrangement with a German house, presumably Messrs. Wonnehaus, and it is quite possible that his cold reception of Messrs. Ellinger's proposals may be no more than an attempt to extract more advantageous terms by pretending that the German offer is more profitable, but I am myself inclined to believe that for once the Muin has given the true motive of his attitude. He has, I know, approached the German Legation with regard to another enterprise, and was very likely much impressed with the big talk of the German Chargé d'Affaires, and it is quite conceivable that he has been persuaded that it will be better to place his oxide Concession under the protection of a Power known to be making special efforts to extend its commercial interests, rather than under that of Great Britain with whose Legation he might be brought into conflict on issues quite foreign to that of the Oxide Company.

I have, &c.
(Signed) CHARLES M. MARLING.

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No. 57.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received April 13.)

(No. 68.)

Sir,

Tehran, March 25, 1908.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 58 of the 18th March, I have the honour to transmit herewith copy of a despatch from Mr. Consul-General Wratislaw forwarding translations of further Memoranda exchanged between the Ottoman and Persian Commissioners at Urmia, and giving a short review of the work of the Commission up till the time that negotiations were suspended by the departure of Taher Pasha for Serai on the 29th February. Mr. Wratislaw also makes some observations on the personality and qualification of the two Chief Commissioners which I must confess convey to me a far less favourable impression of Mohtashem-es-Sultaneh than that I received from his telegram No. 22 of the 6th March, and it seems probable that there is not so much divergence of opinion between him and M. Cherkassoff on the merits of the Commissioners as I had been led to believe. He also makes mention of Mohtashem-es-Sultaneh's Persian colleagues, of whose existence I now hear for the first time. Indeed, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, whom I specially interrogated on this point, informed me that Mohtashem-es-Sultaneh was the sole Persian Delegate, and his Excellency said further that all negotiations were carried on between Taher Pasha and Mohtashem-es-Sultaneh alone. Mr. Wratislaw's Report, however, seems to indicate that at least the two junior Turkish Delegates are present at the meetings of the Commission.

I have, &c.
(Signed) CHARLES M. MARLING.

P.S. *March 25.*—I have since received the reply of the Persian Government to our identic note and I have the honour to inclose translation thereof. The reply seems to me to be quite as satisfactory as could be expected; it is at all events a strong expression of gratitude to the two Powers for their successful endeavours to obtain the evacuation of Soujboulak, and implies a reliance—if not an exclusive reliance—on similar favours from the two Powers in the future.

C. M. M.

Inclosure 1 in No. 57.

Consul-General Wratislaw to Mr. Marling.

(No. 4. Confidential.)

Sir,

Urmi, March 2, 1908.

I HAVE the honour to inclose herewith translations of the third Memoranda which have passed between the Turkish and Persian Frontier Commissioners, dated the 17th Muharrem (20th February) and 19th Muharrem (22nd February) respectively. Some further letters have since been exchanged, but I have not yet received copies of them, and I understand that they are merely of a recriminatory character and do not in any way elucidate the question at issue.

As reported in my telegram No. 21 of the 29th February, the Ottoman Commissioners have abruptly left Urmi, and I take the opportunity of this suspension of negotiations to review the labours of the Commission at greater length than I have been able to do by telegraph.

During the three weeks that Taher Pasha lingered at Balu near Urmi some informal communications passed between him and the Persian Commissioner, principally concerning the scope of the Commission. At first Taher Pasha declared that his mission was limited to an inquiry into the events connected with Majd-es-Sultaneh's expedition to Tergaver and his expulsion from that district by Turkish troops, but he finally confessed that he was empowered to enter into the question of the frontier generally, and it was agreed that the scope of the Commission should be unlimited.

The delay at Balu was partly due to the late arrival of Daniel Pasha and Ali Nadir Pasha, the two principal military members of the Turkish Commission, and partly to differences of opinion regarding the lodging to be provided for the Turks. Both sides changed their minds so often and so needlessly regarding this point that it was difficult

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to understand what their respective wishes really were; but at last, on the 26th January, the Turkish Commission came to Urmi, and were installed in a house not far from that inhabited by Muhteshem-es-Sultaneh.

After several days wasted in the inevitable calls, the Turkish and Persian Commissioners met to discuss the manner in which their negotiations were to be conducted. Muhteshem-es-Sultaneh proposed that the Turks should lead off with a Memorandum stating their case, and that he should reply in writing, and that they should then meet for verbal discussion of the points raised. This procedure was accepted by Taher and was followed throughout the brief life of the Commission. Muhteshem-es-Sultaneh made a point of the Turks beginning, thus giving them the deal and the declaration, and forcing himself to adapt his game to theirs, which would appear to have been an error in judgment as things turned out. For Taher Pasha in his first Memorandum did not enter into the details of the affairs at all, but simply give a list of ancient Treaties which, according to him, handed "Kurdistan" to the Turks, and Muhteshem-es-Sultaneh was obliged to reply on the same lines, pointing out that Article III of the most recent Treaty, that concluded at Erzeroum in 1847, barred all territorial claims excepting those mentioned in Article II of the same Treaty. The Turks replied, asserting that Article III only referred to the districts mentioned in Article II, and demanding that the Persians should cease their interference with "our tribes and territory" in the districts of Kurdistan from Bayazid to Suleimanieh inclusive. Muhteshem-es-Sultaneh answered, amplifying his former argument and requesting Taher Pasha to explain the "interference" of the Persian Government in Ottoman territory.

In his reply, somewhat arrogant in tone, Taher stated that as the Persian Commissioner "relied exclusively" on Article III of the Treaty of Erzeroum, the interpretation of this was a matter for reference to their respective Governments, and that meanwhile he reiterated his demand for abstention from interference with "our Kurds."

Muhteshem-es-Sultaneh hastened to reply that he by no means exclusively relied on Article III of the Treaty of Erzeroum, but had merely followed the lead of the Ottoman Commission in limiting his replies to the points raised by the latter. He pointed out that Taher Pasha had not yet entered on the real object of the Commission, which had been appointed to investigate Persian—not Turkish—complaints of aggression, and expressed his disappointment at the inequitable attitude of the Ottoman Commission.

This last Memorandum was dated on the 19th Muharrem (23rd February), and Taher had already made up his mind to depart. He called on me on the 21st February, and informed me that he considered that his mission was accomplished. The Persians, he said, had accepted his view that the frontier question must be settled according to Treaty, and that as neither of them was competent to decide on the right interpretation to be placed on Article III of the Treaty of Erzeroum the matter must be left to their Governments to settle. It was, therefore, no use his staying on at Urmi, and he proposed to leave on the 25th. By some process of reasoning, which I was unable to follow, he seemed to think that he had achieved a notable triumph and was quite jubilant.

I pointed out to him that the frontier question was not only not settled, but hardly touched on, and that in any case he had no business to take himself off without asking permission from Constantinople. I warned him that if he broke up the Commission as he proposed to do, the inevitable conclusion would be drawn that Turkey and Persia had shown themselves unable to settle their difference alone, and that results regrettable from his point of view might follow. He replied that everything would pan out all right, and that he should certainly start. I then urged him to give me his word not to set out before the 28th February, thinking that a week would be ample time for me to communicate with His Majesty's Ambassador at Constantinople, and for instructions to be sent to him to remain at Urmi if such a course was considered desirable. After considerable demur, he finally gave me the required promise.

I saw Taher Pasha again four times before his departure and repeated my remonstrances without the slightest result. He told me that whatever happened he would not return to Urmi, where he had been most uncomfortable in the unsatisfactory lodging provided for him. He said he could not abide Muhteshem-es-Sultaneh, who had started persecuting the Sunnis in Urmi as soon as the Turkish Commission arrived, just to show his contempt for the latter. In the, to him, unlikely event of his being ordered to resume the negotiations the Commission must meet elsewhere, say at Dilman or Kuhneh Shehr in Salmas, if not somewhere in Turkey. Altogether he showed himself a very narrow-minded and obstinate old gentleman.

I should add that I have no knowledge of the persecution of the Sunnis to which he refers, though the considerable influx of Sunni Kurds from the south into the town during the stay of the Turkish Commission caused the townspeople some anxiety.

On the evening of the 28th February I received your telegram No. 14 repeating Sir N. R. O'Connor's telegram No. 46 to the Foreign Office. I at once wrote to inform Taher that the Turkish Minister for Foreign Affairs was sending him instructions to remain at Urmi. He promptly replied that he would go to a Turkish telegraph office to wait for any instructions there might be for him, and he left on the following morning for Serai via Dilman. I to-day received a telegram from him to say that he had reached the latter town in safety.

The relations between the two Commissions have throughout been far from cordial. Muhteshem-es-Sultaneh is quick-tempered and not endowed with much tact, while the arrogant assumption of Taher that all the territory at stake was indisputably Turkish was very aggravating to his opponent. The Soujboulak incident was like oil on the flames, and latterly the attitude of the two Chief Commissioners towards one another resembled that of the proverbial cat and dog.

Muhteshem's colleagues do not appear to have counted at all, and he treated them, so far as my observation went, as mere cyphers. Whatever he did, he did off his own bat, and he certainly refrained from troubling me with requests for advice, though I made a point of calling on him two or three times a week to see if I could be of any use and to learn how things were progressing.

Taher Pasha also showed great and perhaps unwise independence of his colleagues, Daniel Pasha and Ali Nadir Pasha. Both struck me as able and well-informed men, but Taher, so I learned from Muhteshem, did all the talking, and it was obvious that they did not entirely agree with his attitude. I have gathered the same from these gentlemen themselves.

Should negotiations be resumed it is to be hoped that Taher Pasha may be replaced as head of the Turkish Commission either by Daniel Pasha or some other less pig-headed and more conciliatory person than himself. The relations between him and the Persian Commissioner are such as to render an amicable solution under their joint auspices extremely improbable even should his secret, as opposed to his ostensible, instructions be modified in a more conciliatory sense.

I have, &c
(Signed) A. C. WRATISLAW.

Inclosure 2 in No. 57.

Reply by the Turkish Commissioners to the Memorandum of the Persian Commissioners, dated 14 Muharrem, 1326.

(Translation.)

17 Muharrem, 1326

THE Treaty of 1263 on which you again rely in your Memorandum, refers exclusively to the frontier and territory of Zohab, Mohammerah, and Suleimanieh, which it defines and explains; and the IIIrd Article which you mention is attached to the territory and frontiers defined in Article II of the same Treaty, so it has nothing to do with the territory and frontiers of the districts of Kurdistan between Bayazid and Suleimanieh, treated of in our first Memorandum.

Consequently, since you rely exclusively on this Article, the interpretation of such things belongs to our superiors, and in order that conduct may conform to the orders which shall hereafter be received it suffices up to repeat our former demand regarding non-interference meanwhile with our Kurds.

Inclosure 3 in No. 57.

Reply by the Persian Commissioners to the Memorandum of the Turkish Commissioners, dated 17 Muharrem, 1326.

(Translation.)

19 Muharrem, 1326.

THOUGH the IInd and IIIrd Articles of the Treaty of 1263 are perfectly plain, and decide and terminate the claims of the two States, yet, as the Imperial Ottoman

Commission considered that the interpretation of these two Articles belongs to their supreme authorities, the Persian Commission, out of respect for your statement, will wait to be informed of the result of this reference. But I think a renewal of these statements necessary in order to remove doubt on two points in your respected Memorandum.

First, seeing that the following expression has been used, "since you rely exclusively on this Article," the Imperial Ottoman Commission must call to mind that when first the Persian Commission asked for proofs in the matter of the aggressions of Turkish officials on the territory and property of Persia, your honourable Commission decided to rely on sacred Treaties; and consequently the declaration which followed on the part of the Persian Commission in that matter only copied the example of your honourable Commission, and there is accordingly no ground whatever for saying that we confined ourselves to this Article.

Secondly, what you say about "non-interference meanwhile with our Kurds, in order that conduct may conform to the orders which shall hereafter be received," has been the cause of great astonishment, because it was the excessive interference of the officials of your Government which led to the complaints of the Persian to the Ottoman Government and resulted in the appointment of an International Commission; and even if we shut our eyes to the sentiments which have taken the place of the equitable conduct we hoped for from you, these unexpected declarations and the perversion of the real question tend to destroy the incontestable rights of the Persian Government. The eyes of your honourable Commission should be directed to the reason and foundation of your mission. The Persian Government complained and protested to the Turkish Government regarding the aggressions of your frontier officials on our territory and the injury done to Persian subjects; and the Ottoman Government, considering that, in view of the friendship between the two States, such aggressions on the part of its officials were improbable, proposed that the two Commissions should be sent to inquire into the Persian complaints. The Persian Government, though understanding that the acceptance of this proposal would result in delay, and that such delay would cause injury to its rights, yet wishing to avoid possible harm to the friendship between the two States from unexpected occurrences, accepted the proposal and formed the Commission; and being, as it still is, extremely sanguine, waited for the rights of Persia to be righted on the arrival of the two Commissions. But now the Commissions have met, and no sufficient efforts have been made by your Commission of Inquiry in the matter of any one of Persia's true complaints and declarations of right will remain *in statu quo*, and the complaints of my Government have rather been added to by reason of the advance of Fazil Pasha. Besides this, the Ottoman Commission, which proclaims itself a Commission of Inquiry, instead of completely accomplishing its duties, has entered on a question outside the matter in discussion between the two States, and certainly such statements on the part of your honourable Commission will have no effect beyond destroying our rights in the eyes of the friends of Persia.

Inclosure 4 in No. 57.

Mushir-ed-Dowleh to Mr. Marling.

(Translation.)

Tehran, March 23, 1908.

I HAVE the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your note of the 12th instant respecting the evacuation of Soujboulak. Although the Persian Government has always been grateful to the high officials of the British and Russian Governments for assistance given by them in frontier questions and differences arising between Persia and Turkey, this gratitude has, on this occasion, been increased on account of the withdrawal of Turkish intruders from Soujboulak, through the joint assistance of the two Governments. It is hoped that by the good-will and help of the two Powers the frontier differences between Persia and Turkey will soon be satisfactorily settled and peace and harmony be restored among the frontier inhabitants.

I avail, &c.

(Signed) MUSHIR-ED-DOWLEH.

[12643]

No. 58.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received April 13.)

(No. 69.)

Tehran, March 26, 1908.

Sir,

THE first accounts of the attempt on the Shah's life on the 28th ultimo, which I was able to send in my despatch No. 44 of the same day, and in my telegram No. 61 the following morning, require some modification, but I think that the following details of the occurrence are substantially accurate:—

His Majesty left the Palace by the eastern entrance in an open six-horsed carriage, preceded by a similar vehicle, and also by a motor car with the hood up, driven by a French chauffeur. The procession was headed by a number of Palace guards some of whom also were riding abreast of the three vehicles, while that which conveyed His Majesty was escorted closely by Amir Behadur Jang and M. Chapchal. The chauffeur appears to have had some apprehensions that an *attentat* might be attempted, for when in the narrow street a few yards beyond M. Rabino's house, he saw a man step forward from a small side street holding something wrapped in cloth in his hand, he at once put on full speed in the hope of passing clear of the coming explosion. The would-be assassin also must have lost his *sangfroid*, for the bomb struck the ground before reaching the car, and also, somewhat too far back to injure the driver, who was, however, hurled from his seat, but without injury. The car itself was comparatively slightly damaged, a shattered panel in the body and a large hole in the hood, being the worst injury. A moment later, a second bomb was thrown which fell between the motor car and the first carriage, and by its explosion killed one of the leading horses and wounded the other, and at the same time shots were fired from the flat roofs of the nearest houses. Two persons were killed by the bomb and seven or eight injured. All was confusion among the Shah's people; Amir Behadur Jang and M. Chapchal pushed up to the scene of the explosion, leaving the Shah for a few moments quite alone. Both drew their revolvers and began firing at the people on the roof, but the latter was, by his own account, so excited, that though he believed he had emptied his pistol, he never, as a matter of fact, succeeded in firing a single shot. He and Amir Behadur Jang suddenly remembered that the Shah was unprotected, and hastily returned to find His Majesty getting out of his carriage. They then tried to get His Majesty into the nearest house, but finding the door barred, crossed the street to the house of the Shah's head coachman, where they gained admittance. The Shah was quite calm at the moment and asked for a glass of water, but was induced by the suggestion that he might be offered a poisoned draught, to await the arrival of his own water bearer. He then suggested leaving the house and returning to the Palace, but no sooner had he emerged on the street than two or three shots were fired, one of which is said to have struck the wall close by. His Majesty then seized a rifle from one of the Bakhtiari guards standing by and attempted to return the shot, but was prevented by M. Chapchal and Amir Behadur Jang who unceremoniously hustled their master back into shelter. Once inside the house, His Majesty gave way for a few minutes to an outburst of passion, and ordered that the whole quarter should be destroyed and its inhabitants slain. His wrath was soon over, and as soon as the firing ceased His Majesty started on foot for the Palace, and on the way was greeted with considerable enthusiasm.

It is a somewhat disquieting symptom that, as soon as they became aware of the attempt on the Shah's life, Amir Behadur Jang's guard began to rob the passers-by in the street and to pillage the neighbouring houses. They even stole two horses from a tramcar which, however, were returned the following morning.

It is a lamentable fact that, despite the cheers with which the Shah was received, immediately after his escape the general feeling in the Capital and in many places in the provinces also, was one of regret that the attempt had failed.

On the following day a few arrests were made, but it was generally understood that the real culprits were at liberty; indeed, no serious effort seems to have been made to discover them, for it was not till four days after the outrage that it occurred to the authorities to take the obvious measure of forcing open the locked doors of the house whence the second bomb was thrown, and such was the apathy displayed that the Shah was forced to send a rescript to the Assembly to stimulate the Government into activity. The bombs were of small size and made of thin cast-iron, a fact which is held to prove that they must have been of foreign origin, as the art of casting in iron

is scarcely known in this country. The wildest rumours have been current as to the instigators of the *attentat*; the first person on whom suspicion fell was Zil-es-Sultan, whose "anderoon" (women's quarters) windows overlooked the scene; next the Azerbaijan "Enjumen" was accused, but apparently for no better reason than that Tabreez was the city whence the Shah had been most violently denounced during the December crisis; but the latest and most widely circulated theory is that the whole affair was got up by M. Chapchal, and it is even said that full confession of the *coup* has been made by two of the five or six men who were eventually arrested, and against whom there seems to be fairly strong evidence of complicity. Towards the end of the month public interest was for a few days aroused anew by the murder of Kavam-ul-Mulk, and the attempt on his son's life at Shiraz, but it soon died away again, and, at present, there seems to be but little prospect that any further serious steps will be taken to push the inquiry to a conclusion.

The bomb which exploded on the morning following the *attentat*, appears to have been hastily hidden by the would-be assassins. It was discovered by the two outdoor servants of Sahib Ekhtiar who were removing rubbish. From the injuries they received, it seems clear that they must have been squatting on their heels with the bomb on the ground between them.

I have, &c.
(Signed) CHARLES M. MARLING.

[12644]

No. 59.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received April 13.)

(No. 70.)

Sir,

Tehran, March 26, 1908.

WITH reference to my telegram No. 74 of the 11th March, I have the honour to report that when I saw the Minister for Foreign Affairs on the 18th instant I again adverted to the apparent readiness of the Persian Government to welcome German influence in the internal affairs of the country. The latest instance which had been brought to my notice were the reports that the Persian Government was making difficulties over the renewal of the contracts of the French professors holding posts in various educational and scientific establishments, with, it is said, the object of installing Germans in their places. It was not, of course, a matter in which the Legation had a direct interest, though personally I thought it a mistake to substitute new men unacquainted with the country or language for others who had already acquired that necessary knowledge. I merely mentioned it to show that public report indorsed my own conviction of the Germanophil proclivities of the Government, and I wished to let his Excellency understand once again how seriously His Majesty's Government looked on the possibility of German interference at the invitation of Persia.

With regard to the alleged proposals to employ foreign, that is, perhaps German, advisers in various branches of the Persian Administration, I repeated the language which I have reported in my despatch No. 53 of the 15th March. The recent disclaimers which his Excellency had given both to me and to the Russian Minister of any intention on the part of the Persian Government to introduce German influence as a set-off against Great Britain and Russia had been so far reassuring that we had thought it unnecessary to make the communication officially. I thought, however, that it would be a friendly act to let his Excellency know that I had been authorized to make it, as it would show his Excellency that, while Great Britain and Russia had no wish to interfere in Persian internal affairs, they were very firmly decided to prevent the intrusion of any other Power.

His Excellency replied, as he did on a previous occasion, that I was quite needlessly alarmed about German aims here. The incident of the German school, for instance, had been very much exaggerated, and had no political significance at all. I asked his Excellency whether he imagined that Germany was spending money here on educating young Persians "pour les beaux yeux de la Perse," and his Excellency dropped that line of argument. He went on to say that his Government was now quite alive to the views of His Majesty's Government as regards the intrusion of other Powers in Persian affairs, and he would not fail to impress his colleagues with the necessity of keeping them in view. As for the question of the French professors, he

was quite ready to give me a formal assurance on behalf of the Government that there was no intention of replacing them by others of German nationality. I said I was glad to hear it, and the decision seemed to me to be a wise one, and I was sure it would give great pleasure if made by his Excellency to the French Minister.

I doubt if much reliance is to be placed in Mushir-ed-Dowleh's declarations in this latter question. I have heard, not from M. de La Martinière alone, but from quite independent sources, that a great effort is being made to oust the French in favour of German professors, but whether this is the work of the Teutonophil members of the Ministry or of the German Legation I am unable to say. It is, however, by no means improbable that Count Quadt would maintain that such action is not incompatible with the declarations of his Government.

I have, &c.
(Signed) CHARLES M. MARLING.

[12645]

No. 60.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received April 13.)

(No. 71. Confidential.)

Tehran, March 26, 1908.

Sir,

FOR the past three weeks reports of growing insistence have reached me that Ehtesham-es-Sultaneh had no intention of taking up his post in London, of which indeed the fact that he had so tenaciously clung to the Presidency of the Assembly was fair confirmation, and I have on various occasions urged on Mushir-ed-Dowleh that he could not delay his departure indefinitely without a breach of courtesy towards His Majesty's Government who were already not a little surprised that the Minister designate should have shown no signs of leaving. I made no attempt to conceal from either Mushir-ed-Dowleh or from Ehtesham-es-Sultaneh himself that one reason for my desire to see the latter start for Europe was that I was apprehensive that his pro-German proclivities might have unfortunate consequences, but I have with both rather laid stress on the fact that if Persia desires to obtain the assistance of His Majesty's Government in financial matters, it is of importance for her to have a Representative thoroughly acquainted with the situation here to plead her cause in London.

Although both Mushir-ed-Dowleh and Ehtesham-es-Sultaneh assured me repeatedly that the latter would not fail to leave for London immediately after Norouz, I was by no means surprised when I paid the usual ceremonious visit on that day (21st March) to learn from the former that Ehtesham-es-Sultaneh has declared his wish to return to Berlin, and would in no case go to London. However, the President of the Assembly had, apparently, taken no irrevocable decision, for when I saw him an hour later he told me he would start as soon as I thought it necessary. Two days afterwards I saw these high Persian dignitaries at a ball at the Russian Legation and both assured me that Ehtesham-es-Sultaneh would resign the Presidency of the Chamber within a few days and leave immediately for London. Such would appear to be Ehtesham-es-Sultaneh's resolution for the moment, but when I saw Mushir-ed-Dowleh the following day I told him that he would do well to let Ehtesham-es-Sultaneh understand that by playing fast and loose in this manner he was preparing a cold reception for himself in London, as His Majesty's Government would much resent being treated in so cavalier a fashion.

Ehtesham-es-Sultaneh's motives in this business are probably not far to seek. Like every other Persian he is strongly actuated by self-interest, but he has also a certain measure of patriotism. Since his attack on the Great Mujtehed, Seyed Abdullah, he has conceived the possibility of becoming virtually the Dictator of Persia, but the growing popular discontent with the Majliss, due in great part to his mistaken ideas of conducting its business, has strongly affected his own position, shaken as it already was by his quarrel with the clergy. In the last few days his position has been very insecure. Although on recognizing the necessity of securing an honourable retreat, his natural inclination urged him to Berlin where his German wife still resides, the belief that he could better serve his country by going to London combined with his well-known wish to become well acquainted with that capital, decided him at the last moment in favour of the latter post.

In any case his disappearance from Tehran will be a serious loss to the German Legation.

I have, &c.
(Signed) CHARLES M. MARLING.

[12646]

No. 61.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received April 13.)

(No. 72.)
Sir,

Tehran, March 26, 1908.

WITH reference to my telegram No. 82 of the 26th instant, I have the honour to transmit herewith copy of Major Kennion's detailed report regarding the system and number of employes on the Khaf-Seistan telegraph line. Appended to the report are an estimate of the cost per mensem of the telegraphs and line establishment and a report on the condition of the line prepared by Mr. W. R. Howson, Sub-Assistant Superintendent of Telegraphs. It is to be presumed that this despatch will furnish the information, or most of it, required by your telegram No. 66 of the 23rd instant.

I would point out, with reference to the inference drawn by Major Kennion in the concluding sentence of section 4 of his despatch, that M. de Hartwig has informed me more than once that the local Russian Telegraph Department is in ignorance of the proposed exchange of lines.

From other passages in his despatch (notably section 5 (a), (b), and (f), paragraph 2) it would almost seem as if Major Kennion anticipated that after the exchange has been effected Russia will still retain signallers on the line in the same position as that now occupied by the British signallers. I should be glad to learn whether this is in accordance with the arrangement contemplated by His Majesty's Government. It would certainly seem desirable that the Russian signallers should be entirely removed, and I submit that it is a condition we may well require, seeing that no British functionaries of any kind will remain on the Tehran-Meshed line.

On one other point I would venture to offer an observation. In section 6 Major Kennion suggests that it would be convenient that the control and maintenance of the Khaf-Seistan section should be carried out under the general superintendence of His Majesty's Consul for Seistan and Kain. I can well conceive that this arrangement will have advantages so long as this section remains *en l'air* as regards the other British telegraph lines in Persia; but if, as is hoped, it should at some time be connected up with the remainder of the system by an extension from Seistan to Robat, the Director of the Indo-European Telegraph Department at Tehran will probably prefer to have the management of the line under his exclusive jurisdiction.

I have, &c.
(Signed) CHARLES M. MARLING.

Inclosure 1 in No. 61.

Major Kennion to Government of India.

Sir,

Seistan, February 23, 1908.

I HAVE the honour to request a reference to the Government of India's despatch, dated the 16th January, 1908, to His Majesty's Secretary of State for India on the subject of the telegraph line from Meshed to Tehran and Seistan.

2. In the fourth paragraph of the above-cited paper it is mentioned that the Government of India are in possession of no very definite information regarding the system and number of employes on the Khaf-Seistan section. I submit, in this connection, a copy of a note recorded by Mr. Howson, Sub-Assistant Superintendent of Telegraphs, which I trust will be found to supply the details required.

3. It will be noted that the list of the Russian staff, on the line given in Mr. Marling's Confidential despatch dated the 2nd December, 1907, is correct, with the exception of the inclusion of the mechanic Constantinow, who worked on the Meshed-Seh Deh section and who has since been withdrawn.

4. As regards the cost of upkeep, the inquiries I have made elicit the fact that no money is handed over by the local Governors of Seistan and Kain for this purpose. The Director of Customs, Seistan, has also told me that no money is paid from customs

revenues. The gholams and line staff are, it seems, paid direct by the Russians; and if the latter are reimbursed at all, it is probably from telegraph receipts at Meshed or Tehran. It may be noted that the gholams on the southern section of the line have recently been complaining of not having received their pay. The inference may perhaps be drawn that the Russians, having failed to obtain reimbursement of sums previously spent on this account, and in view of their connection with the line being severed, have discontinued payment.

5. The following are suggestions as to action which it will be necessary to take when the line is handed over to us:—

(a.) At Nasratabad, Seistan, there are three rooms in the same telegraph building, set apart for the Persian, Russian, and British offices. At the present time the British office is only used for the storage of material, our signaller doing his work in the Persian office. The line goes first to the Russian office, whence it is given to the Persian office by means of a commutator. The steps to be taken will be to remove the present terminal pole to outside the British office, and to so connect the wires as to place the control of the line in our hands instead of as at present in the hands of the Russians. Or else—and it would be preferable as attracting less attention—for ourselves and the Russians to exchange rooms.

(b.) At Birjand, British, Russian, and Persian signallers have hitherto worked in the same office. If this arrangement continues, no alteration of the wire will be necessary, though, when occasion offers, an endeavour should be made to obtain the use of a separate room, and so to arrange the wire as to give our signaller the control of the line.

If, however, in the meantime the Russians succeed in obtaining a separate room for their tape instrument, either with or without the control of the line, we should, I presume, expect them to transfer the privilege to us on the agreement being brought into effect.

The latest information I have received on this subject is that orders have been received from Tehran not to allow the line-wire to go first to the Russian's room.

(c.) At Khaf it will be necessary to arrange for a telegraph building and quarters for the signaller. The requisite instruments, in order to carry out the proposal of separate offices and commutators, will also have to be sent. This point will be further touched on in connection with line staff.

(d.) Although Mr. Howson's note shows that the line is ill-constructed, it would not seem necessary to undertake its reconstruction immediately. This could be done gradually, and the batteries, insulators, and other fittings could be replaced as they become worn out. An immediate inspection of the line with the view of making estimates for the future and the submission of indents would be advisable.

(e.) The introduction of telephones, on the line which has been suggested by Mr. Howson, would seem advisable on all grounds.

(f.) The only additions to the British staff on the line, which now stands as shown in the margin,* would be a signaller for Khaf.

Both Mr. McManus and Mr. Howson, who are the Sub-Assistant Superintendents at Seistan and Birjand respectively, have experience of construction work, and the deputation of a special inspector from India to look after the line would be superfluous. It would, however, be necessary to give a special allowance to the individual selected for the charge of the line. At present, as Mr. Howson is doing very useful political work in Birjand, it seems that the best and most convenient arrangement would probably be for Mr. McManus to have charge of the line as Inspecting Telegraph Master, with his head-quarters in Seistan, whence he would make an annual inspection of the line in the autumn. I should prefer, however, that a final decision on this point should be left pending a settlement regarding the Birjand Vice-Consulate.

As regards Khaf, it may be expected, when the exchange of lines takes place, that the Kniaz Vachadze will be transferred to this place, and a Russian signaller sent in his place. In any case, it would seem advisable that the British signaller sent to Khaf should have some experience of the country and be able to speak the language, so that—as his telegraph work will be small—he may be of use as a newsagent. The post, however, will be an isolated one, and should, I think, carry with it a special allowance. In this connection I would point out that it does not seem really necessary for either the Russians or ourselves to have a signaller at Khaf. A mutual agreement not to keep British or Russian signallers there would not, so far as I can see, prejudice our

* 2 Sub-Assistant Superintendents, 1 signaller.

political interests in any way, while there would be a material saving of expense. This, however, is a question on which Major Sykes is better qualified to express an opinion.

As pointed out by Mr. Howson, an Indian sub-inspector to take the place of the Russian mechanic will be indispensable.

The line staff of gholam-bashis and gholams should be taken over as they stand. Their pay is adequate and their numbers sufficient. As Khaf will be a terminus, as far as our supervision of the line is concerned, it should be theoretically possible to manage with one gholam at this post instead of two, but in view of a signaller being posted to this place, who would require a peon, I would prefer to waive the question of this trifling reduction.

6. Since the line will remain the property of the Persian Government, it will be convenient that its control and maintenance should be carried out under the general superintendence of His Majesty's Consul for Seistan and Kain; and in these circumstances, if it is decided to keep a signaller at Khaf, he would, I presume, be under the same controlling officer. This suggestion should not be read to imply a recommendation that Khaf, which is at present in the Turbat Consular district, should be included in that of Seistan and Kain. This question would naturally depend on the ultimate decision arrived at regarding the Vice-Consulate at Birjand and Consular arrangements generally in Eastern Persia.

7. A statement showing the annual cost of the suggested telegraph and line establishment is appended.

8. Copies of this letter, with inclosures, are being sent to Tehran, Meshed, and Turbat.

I have, &c.
(Signed) R. L. KENYON, Major, I.A.,
His Britannic Majesty's Consul, Seistan and Kain.

Inclosure 2 in No. 61.

PROPOSED Telegraph and Line Establishment.

	Per Mensem.	
	Rupees.	Rupees
1 Sub-Assistant Superintendent—		
Pay	300	
Local allowance	60	
Horse allowance	30	
Allowance for charge of line	100	490
1 Sub-Assistant Superintendent—		
Pay	300	
Local allowance	60	
Horse allowance	30	390
1 Signaller Seistan—		
Pay	175	
Local allowance	35	
Horse allowance	30	240
1 Signaller (Khat)—		
Pay	210	
Local allowance	42	
Horse allowance	30	
Special allowance	50	332
1 Indian Sub-Inspector—		
Pay	50	50
2 Persian gholam-bashis (170 krans each)	50 each.	100
17 gholams (100 krans each)	29 : 6 : 7 each	500
Total		2,102

Inclosure 3 in No. 61.

Report on the Khaf-Seistan Telegraph Line, by Mr. W. R. Howson, Sub-Assistant Superintendent of Telegraphs, Birjand.

Line Stores at present in use.

Wire Gauge.—In my opinion the gauge is as near as possible to, if not identical with, Indian telegraph iron wire gauge No. 12, weighing 300 lb. per mile.

The Russian inspector informed me that the diameter of the line wire was 4 millim. This would be identical with Indian telegraph wire gauge No. 14, weighing 350 lb. to the mile. This point, however, could easily be decided by sending a sample piece of wire to the Telegraph Store Yard, Calcutta.

Wire: Faulty Construction.—In many places I found the line wire, even in summer time, stretched quite taut between the supports. Notwithstanding the short spans at present existing, this must result in a great strain on the wire, particularly during the winter months, when occasionally the temperature goes down in some places to zero.

Joints.—"Twist" and not "Britannia" joints are in use.

Posts: Kinds.—These are of poplar and pine (vernacular names "Safida" poplar, and "naju" sometimes called "Sarv" pine).

Posts: Dimensions.—The posts average 20 feet in length, and are buried 3 feet in the ground. The average girth at the top is 9 inches, and at the base 19 inches.

Posts: Where Obtainable and Rate.—Both kinds of post are obtainable at Khaf at the rate of 20 krans (rupees 5 : 14) each, and a limited number of poplar posts in the Sunnikhane district at an average rate of 10 krans (rupees 2 : 15) each.

Posts: Cost of Transport.—The cost of transport per post from Khaf to Seistan is 80 krans (rupees 23 : 8 : 6), and that of poplar posts from Sunnikhane to Seistan would be about 35 krans (rupees 10 : 4 : 5) each.

The posts are carried down and disturbed shortly after cutting; whereas, if they were allowed to dry where cut, the cost of transport would be much less.

The number of poplar posts obtainable in the Sunnikhane district would be sufficient for our yearly requirements for the portion of the line from Sihdeh to Seistan, and it will only be necessary to indent on Khaf for the northern section.

Posts: Numbers per Mile.—The Russians have adopted, from information received from the Russian inspector, 16 posts to the verst, which works out to 24.15 per mile.

The reason for such a high proportion is due to the prevalence of white ants, which freely attack the portions of the posts buried. It will be readily understood that the nearer the posts are to one another the less likelihood there is, when a post breaks off, of the wire sagging so near to the ground as to be within reach of camels.

Posts: Average Life.—I should set down the average life per post as seven years, though the Russian inspector seems to think it only five years. It is interesting to note that the posts situated in the Hamun last much longer than on dry land.

Insulators and Brackets.—The insulator (see Diagram No. 2*) is an ordinary porcelain cup, and is fixed by means of cement to one end of a curved stalk, the other end of which is screwed into the post.

I have found these insulators and stalks answer the purpose very well. If, however, the same pattern is not stocked by the Indian Government Telegraph Department it could be replaced, as occasion demands, by the kind used in India (in Kashmir, for example). In this case, of course, brackets and backs would also have to be supplied.

Technical.—A list of the telegraph offices on the line will be found in the tables attached.

Circuit.—All the offices are joined up for ordinary "open circuit" working.

Instruments.—Each office is fitted up with a Morse set, consisting of relay (resistance 50 ohms), sounder, key, and galvanometer fitted on a board. Also a two-plat lightning discharger and a four-bar switch or commutator. All the instruments are by Messrs. Siemens Bros., London.

Switch.—Of all the above-mentioned instruments the switch is the only one which calls for particular mention, on account of the part it plays in the "tapping" of messages.

* Not printed.

This switch, *vide* Diagram No. 1,* is used for joining the line "direct" or for "K.O.," i.e., keeping open. With plugs inserted in holes 3 and 4 the line is joined direct, and with plugs in 1 and 2 both sides of the line are connected with the instruments. When, however, a station is working with one side, the plug connecting the other side to the instruments is removed, and that side remains "insulated" until such time as the plug is reinserted or the line joined "direct."

It is very easy to interpolate the "receiver" of an intermediate office by simply connecting a wire between the screw at one end of bar C and the earth screw of the receiver, and at the same time throwing off the earth connection.

The plugs inserted for this interpolating would be 1 and 4 or 2 and 3.

By interpolating the "receiver" an intermediate office can easily "tap" any telegrams that may be exchanged between an office on one side and another on the other side of the intermediate office.

Batteries.—The battery in use at present is the "Medinger," a variety of the "Daniell."

This class of battery has been introduced by the Russians in place of the "Minotto" battery formerly used by the Persians.

In my opinion the "Minotto" is, if anything, preferable, as it requires less supervision, and cannot be so easily tampered with by the Persian telegraphists, the majority of whom know very little about technical telegraphy.

Should the "Minotto" battery be adopted by us the necessary sawdust is obtainable in Meshed. A limited quantity of sawdust (mulberry and walnut) is also procurable in Birjand, but I think that if an order be placed in advance by the local sawyers sufficient could be collected for all the offices on the line. The extra cost of carriage from Meshed would thereby be saved.

Line Staff: Persian Line Staff.—Tables 1 and 2 show the present distribution of the Persian line establishment.

Persian Line Staff: their Salary.—The Russians pay the Persian line staff at the following rate per mensem:—

Gholam-bashi, 170 krans (50 rupees).

Gholam, 100 krans (rupees 29 : 6 : 7).

The above rates cannot be reduced compatibly with efficiency, and I propose that the same rates be retained by us.

The salary of the gholams includes the upkeep of a horse.

Russian Inspectors.—These have their head-quarters at Khaf and Shusp respectively, their sections being from Meshed to Seh Deh and Seh Deh to Seistan (Seh Deh is situated almost midway between Kain and Birjand).

It will be seen that the Russian inspectors have selected as their head-quarters places almost centrally situated in their sections. Their reason for the same is obviously to more efficiently supervise the line.

British Inspector.—I think one British inspector would be able to supervise the whole line from Khaf to Seistan; but he should be allowed one sub-inspector, to whom I shall allude in a separate paragraph.

British Inspector: his Duties.—The duties of the inspector would be to arrange for a supply of posts, the submitting of indents and supervising the annual repairs of the line, and the technical arrangements of all telegraph offices.

Sub-Inspector: why Necessary.—An Indian Mahomedan sub-inspector would, I think, be absolutely necessary to carry out the annual maintenance repairs under the supervision of the British inspector. He would also instruct the gholam-bashis and gholams in the preparing and maintaining of batteries, the making of joints, and, in fact, in all the routine work necessary for them to know.

British Telegraphists: how they may be Utilized to Assist the Inspector.—The British telegraphists at Seistan and Birjand could when necessary issue orders, on an interruption occurring, to the gholams of the office nearest to the fault to proceed on the line.

Miscellaneous.

Telephones.—As the gholam-bashis at Buniabad and Bandan are unable to signal on the Morse instruments, it is absolutely necessary that they should be supplied with telephones to ascertain the state of communications, and it would be consequently

* Not printed.

necessary for the inspector, sub-inspector, and British telegraphist to be also supplied with similar instruments, so as to be able to communicate with the gholam-bashis.

Telephone: Pattern.—The most suitable telephone in my opinion is that by Ericson, of Stockholm, the same as is used by the Indo-European Telegraph Department on their Kerman-Robat wires.

(Signed) W. R. HOWSON,
Sub-Assistant Superintendent, Telegraphs, Birjand.

Inclosure 4 in No. 61.

TABLE (1) showing present Line Staff, including Persian Telegraphists.

Names of Telegraph Offices.	Persian Telegraphists.	Persian Gholam Bashis.	Persian Gholams.*	Russian Inspectors.†	Russian Mechanic.‡	Russian Signallers.
Khaf	1	..	2	1	..	..
Buniabad .. ..	..	1	2	..	..	..
Kain	1	..	2	..	..	..
Birjand	2	..	2	..	..	1
Sarbisha	1	..	2	..	..	..
Shusp .. ..	..	..	2	1	..	..
Neh	1	..	2	..	..	..
Bandan .. ..	..	1	2	..	..	..
Seistan	1	..	1	..	1	1
	7	2	17	2	1	2

TABLE (2) Wire and Number of Posts from Khaf to Seistan.§

From—	To—	Number of Posts.	Mile of Wire.
Khaf	Buniabad	1,614	41.99
Buniabad	Kain	1,472	60.95
Kain	Birjand	2,091	86.58
Birjand	Sarbisha	1,211	50.14
Sarbisha	Shusp	1,700	70.38
Shusp	Neh	552	22.85
Neh	Bandan	1,368	52.34
Bandan	Seistan	1,632	67.57
		11,040	452.80

[12647]

No. 62.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received April 13.)

(No. 73.)

Sir,

Tehran, March 26, 1908.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 36, Confidential, of the 26th ultimo, I have the honour to transmit herewith copy of the identic note addressed to the Persian

* The term gholam-bashi would correspond with our Indian telegraph sub-inspector, and that of gholam with our Indian line-rider.

† The Russian Inspector is equivalent to the Inspecting Telegraph Master of India.

‡ The Russian mechanic would also correspond with our sub-inspector; but he, like the latter, being more experienced and better trained than the gholam-bashi, is naturally far superior to him.

§ The line has been constructed with sixteen posts to the verst, and this works out to 24.15 posts per mile.

[1580]

Government by the Russian Minister and myself relative to the possibility of a change in the present administration of the Persian customs, and also of the reply I have received from the Minister for Foreign Affairs.

The reply is not so satisfactory as could be wished. It certainly states that the reports of a contemplated change are without foundation, but it does not give any assurances that a change will not be made in the future. In view, however, of the repeated verbal assurances which both I and M. de Hartwig have received from Mushir-ed-Dowleh that the Government have no intention of dismissing the present Belgian employés, and replacing them by other foreigners, I think it unnecessary to press for more explicit assurances in writing.

I have, &c.
(Signed) CHARLES M. MARLING.

Inclosure 1 in No. 62.

Identic Russian and British Note communicated to Mushir-ed-Dowleh.

Your Excellency,

Tehran, March 6, 1908.

ALTHOUGH formerly the Persian Government had given a solemn assurance to this Legation that there would be no change in the system of administering the customs, according to reports now current it would seem that some alterations in the above-mentioned administration are contemplated. I therefore have the honour to request your Excellency to confirm the previous assurances, and, should this report be incorrect, to deny it.

I have, &c.
(Signed) CHARLES M. MARLING.

Inclosure 2 in No. 62.

Mushir-ed-Dowleh to Mr. Marling.

(Translation.)

March 19, 1908.

IN reply to your note of the 6th instant, inquiring as to the change of the state of the customs, I have the honour to state that no steps have been taken to change the condition of the customs, and the rumour is unfounded.

I avail, &c.
(Signed) MUSHIR-ED-DOWLEH.

[12648]

No. 63.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received April 13.)

(No. 74.)

Sir,

Tehran, March 27, 1908.

I HAVE the honour to transmit herewith the usual Monthly Summary of Events in Persia for the last four weeks, including an account of the proceedings of the Persian Parliament.

I have, &c.
(Signed) CHARLES M. MARLING.

Inclosure in No. 63.

No. 3.—*Monthly Summary of Events in Persia for week ending March 27, 1908.*

Tehran.

The National Assembly.

The Cabinet, reconstructed as follows, attended the House on the 29th February :—

Minister of Interior and Premier	..	..	Nizam-es-Sultaneh.
" Justice	..	..	Moayed-es-Sultaneh.
" Finance	..	..	Sani-ed-Dowleh.
" Foreign Affairs	..	..	Mushir-ed-Dowleh.
" War	..	..	Zafar-es-Sultaneh.
" Commerce and Customs	..	..	Motamin-ul-Mulk.
" Education	..	..	Mukhber-es-Sultaneh.

During the debate which followed, the question of the employment of foreign advisers for each Ministry was discussed. Condolences were expressed with the Shah on the previous day's attempt on his life, and His Majesty was congratulated on his lucky escape.

On the 5th March the Regulations respecting the import into Ghilan and Mazanderan of silk worm seed were discussed at some length, and the arrangement was described as a "concession" accorded by the Government to Mohtashem-es-Sultaneh.

At the sitting of the 7th March a lengthy Rescript of the Shah was read, in which His Majesty urged the Assembly to insist upon the speedy arrest of the persons who attempted his life on the 28th February.

On the 8th March, at a secret sitting, the corruption of which some of the Deputies had been accused by the press, was discussed for over two hours, and it was strongly urged by the new Deputies that a full inquiry should be held. This was agreed to by a general show of hands, but so far no inquiry has been made.

The most important sitting of the month was that of the 10th March, at which the Foreign Minister was interpolated by Hussein Kuli Khan Nawab concerning the Anglo-Russian Agreement, and by Taki Zade respecting the German School project. Hussein Kuli Khan endeavoured to show that the Persian Government had "protested" against the Agreement, and he expressed surprise at Lord Crewe's statement to the contrary in the House of Lords on the 10th February. A full translation of the debate on this subject is annexed to this Report. Regarding the subvention agreed to by the Persian Government for the German School at Tehran, Taki Zade stated that the House was against the grant of the subvention of 12,000 tomans a year to the school by the Persian Government, and asked on what ground the nation's money had been granted. The Foreign Minister evaded responsibility by throwing it upon the Minister of Education, and left the House under the erroneous impression that the Shah had agreed to pay the money out of the Civil List. No mention was made of the undertaking to pay the subvention out of the Customs revenue. It was decided that in future no grants of the kind should be made without the full authority and sanction of the House.

A letter from Prince Salar-ed-Dowleh, the Shah's brother, who had again been placed under arrest, was read, asking the House whether it approved of his arrest without trial. It was quite apparent from the debate which followed that the Prince, who led the rebellion in Lauristan last summer, had no sympathizers among the Deputies.

The President still retains his seat, though his unpopularity is increasing.

New Governors.

The most important change is the appointment of the Zil-es-Sultan as Governor-General of Fars, who left for Shiraz on the 20th instant.

Ala-ul-Mulk has been appointed Governor of Ispahan, and Serdar Motazid (Behjet-ul-Mulk) has left for Kerman. Zahir-ed-Dowleh, the popular head of the "Dervish" fraternity, and lately Governor of Kermanshah, has been appointed Governor of Resht.

The Press.

The Medjlis newspaper has published several articles on Russo-Turkish relations, in which considerable intimacy with the internal conditions of Russia, but ignorance of Turkish politics, is displayed. The articles are throughout extremely hostile to Russia, and lay great emphasis on her internal troubles and financial embarrassments. Discussing the military preparedness of the two countries, and comparing their internal difficulties, which are described as greater than those of Persia, the writer comes to the conclusion that Turkey would be victorious in case of a war breaking out between them.

The "Habl-ul-Matin" has not lately published anything about the Anglo-Russian Agreement, nor has it attacked the Russian Legation, but has devoted its pages to internal affairs.

All the newspapers have expressed horror at the attempt on the Shah's life.

A leading newspaper has written at some length, and in no flattering terms, of Germany's position among the European Powers.

General News.

In consequence of a disagreement with the Board of Directors, Mr. Rabino, the Chief Manager of the Imperial Bank, has offered his resignation.

M. Bizot arrived at Tehran on the 22nd March.

(Signed) G. P. CHURCHILL,
Oriental Secretary.

Debate on the Anglo-Russian Agreement in the Persian Parliament on March 10, 1908.

Hussein Kuli Khan Nawab, C.B., said that some time ago much criticism was passed in the British Parliament on the subject of the Anglo-Russian Agreement, and the "Times" in giving an account of the debate in the House of Lords on the 10th February, stated that Lord Curzon, in the course of his criticisms on that part of the Agreement which related to Persia, had observed that it was desirable to know what view Persia took of the Agreement. Lord Crewe, who replied on behalf of the British Government, said that the Persian Government had not uttered one word in protest against the Agreement. This statement was in the highest degree astonishing, as it was understood, as soon as the official news of the conclusion of the Agreement was received in Persia, that the necessary protest would be made by the Persian Government. He moved to ask the Minister for Foreign Affairs for information as to what steps had been taken in the matter.

Mushir-ed-Dowleh (Minister for Foreign Affairs).—"This subject was discussed in this House in October last, and I then stated, in reply to inquiries, that the Russian and British Legations had sent copies of the Agreement to the Foreign Ministry, and that after Naser-ul-Mulk's Cabinet had considered it, an answer was drawn up, a copy of which was sent to all the foreign Representatives at the Shah's Court. The purport of this note was as follows:—

"As this Agreement has been concluded between Russia and England, it is evident that its terms will concern these two Powers who have signed it. The Persian State, in view of the independence which she possesses, will consider her interests and rights in general entirely free and protected from the influence or effect of any kind of Agreement which has been or may be concluded between two or more foreign Governments regarding Persia. Regarding her relations with the friendly States, Persia will observe the policy of the open door for international commerce, in accordance with the stipulations of the sacred Treaties. Regarding loans the Persian Government will faithfully observe the Agreements entered into with Russia and England."

Hussein Kuli Khan Nawab.—"It is therefore clear that the Persian Government made a formal protest at the time, and that Lord Crewe's statement in Parliament was

made in pursuance of political considerations of his own, and does not concern Persia, for it is quite apparent that a protest was made.

"When these matters were being discussed in the British Parliament, Lord Crewe stated that the Russian Government had given a separate documentary assurance regarding the Persian Gulf to the British Government, containing a recognition of the British position in the Persian Gulf. It is my opinion that no one in this kingdom approves of the conclusion of Agreements between the friendly Powers respecting Persia, although any discussion which may pass between them, or any Agreement they may conclude without our sanction has no significance. It would, however, be as well for them to consider the feelings of the people of this country, and not to offend them by such proceedings, as Persia has commercial and friendly relations with all the countries of Europe. Has the Foreign Minister any information on the above-mentioned separate Agreement?"

Mushir-ed-Dowleh.—"In the copy of the Agreement which was sent to the Foreign Office there was no mention whatever of the Persian Gulf, and no mention was made of this matter to the Foreign Ministry. No protest was therefore called for."

Hussein Kuli Khan Nawab.—"The foreign newspapers in general write very freely about Persia, although the Persian people have always observed, and now observe, their relations of friendship."

Lessan-el-Hokema.—"Regarding the Nawab's remarks on what was said in the British Parliament, and what was written in the newspapers, I would observe that the foreign press often publish matters which are not in strict accord with the truth, but answer political exigencies, and this is a case in point. Moreover, a protest, such as was called for, was made and was published in the newspapers."

Seyed Hassan Taki Zade.—"This question is of some importance. A matter is communicated to the British Legation, which in their turn communicate it to their Foreign Office and to the appropriate quarter. How does it come about, therefore, that in the British Parliament it is so blatantly asserted in this manner that the Persian Government have offered no protest?" He went on to say that the reason such a misstatement could be made was that there was no Persian official newspaper in which the Persian protest could have been published, and urged the institution of such a newspaper. He said, in conclusion: "It would appear that they do not hear our protest because they do not want to; and we must protest in a much louder voice if we wish to be heard."

Mirza Agha Mujahid.—"As this speech was delivered by a particular Lord for political purposes of his own, it is not necessary to study it very carefully, or to discuss it any further."

The subject was then dropped.

Tabreez.

During February Tabreez was fairly quiet. The local authorities seemed to have gained the upper hand, and to have been able to attend to their work. Their orders were carried out, and police patrolled the streets.

Astrabad.

The Governor of Astrabad, the Sepahdar (Minister of Telegraphs), is reported by the British Agent to be taking very energetic measures to keep the unruly Turcomans of that district in order.

Resht.

Writing on the 10th March, His Majesty's Vice-Consul stated that Acting Governors Mohtashem-ul-Mulk and Serdar Homayun have both resigned. New political societies were being formed daily, and trade was at a standstill. The town was unsafe at night, citizens being attacked and shops looted.

Meshed.

1. The Russian Bank is organizing a Russian hospital, for which subscriptions are being collected. It is proposed to have a large staff, including nurses.

2. It is reported on good authority that the Russians have posted two detachments of Cossacks with three guns on the Darragez frontier. This is probably owing to the disturbances in that district during which the office of the agent of the Russian Bank was broken open.

3. M. de Giers informed Major Sykes that the Russian Secretary from Tabreez had been appointed Vice-Consul for Seistan, and that M. de Klemme would probably go to the Foreign Office to take over charge of the Central Asian section, while M. Dabija, from Ispahan, would come to Meshed.

4. The Governor-General ordered illuminations in honour of the Shah's escape, but the order was disregarded. The general opinion was that had the attempt been successful the illuminations would have been justified. The Governor-General informed Major Sykes very confidentially that upon his appointment to Khorassan, His Majesty secretly instructed him to upset matters in every way.

Turbat-i-Hayderi.

1. The disturbance reported in last month's summary proved to be less serious than there stated. The matter was settled by an apology from the Governor and the local Assembly.

2. Twelve Russian Cossacks arrived about the 15th February, of whom six were to go on to Seistan and six to remain at Turbat.

3. Dr. Otto, the Russian doctor, has been relieved by Dr. Rosenbaum.

4. The Governor of Turbat being pressed for the revenue by the Governor-General of Khorassan early in March, took refuge in the Telegraph Office.

5. Timour Khan was wrongly stated to have been in charge of a caravan on the Yezd road. He is engaged in robbery on that road, and has fifty to sixty men with him.

Ispahan.

1. The Russian Consul-General recently held several meetings of native merchants at the Consulate after dark. His purpose was not known, but the Aghas suspected him of stirring up the people against them. They accordingly denounced the merchants in the Mosque, and ordered a boycott of Russian goods.

2. Ala-ul-Mulk, while on his way to Kerman as Governor, was appointed Governor of Ispahan.

3. Mr. Barnham, on transfer to Smyrna, left Ispahan for Bushire on the 11th March.

4. The Zil-es-Sultan, on his way to Shiraz, arrived at Ispahan on the 24th March.

Yezd.

1. A mad Seyed, of anti-European tendencies, has several times annoyed the European officials of the bank, even attempting to pull one of them off his horse. The Acting Governor has been requested to restrain him.

2. The town remains without a Governor, and a telegram received on the 11th March stated that numbers of villagers had arrived in the town and were parading the streets. They wished to take refuge in the British telegraph office, but were dissuaded. Unless they soon receive some reply to their petitions to Tehran, it seems likely that an outbreak against property and Parsees may result. His Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires is making representations on the subject.

Seistan.

1. Some uneasiness has been caused to the Persian Government by a tour made by the Afghan Governor of Farrah in Chakansur on the Seistan border. Their apprehensions appear to be groundless. The Governor is said to contemplate establishing frontier posts at Yezdan, Maliki, Gulwarda, and Lab-i-Shur.

2. Five Turks arrived in Seistan about the 15th February from India by the Nushki route. They stated they were deserters from Turkish troops in the Yemen, and proposed to stay in Persia until they could return in safety to Turkey.

3. The Governor of Birjand is stated to be on very friendly terms with the Russian doctor there. Major Kennion adds that we have no one of sufficient standing at Birjand for the Governor to call on.

4. During January there were many Kainis buying grain in Seistan. Grain was reported to be very cheap in the Farrah district, but its export to Persia is not allowed. On the 15th February M. Bothiau informed Major Kennion that he had received instructions to allow the export of 2,000 kharvars of grain. It is unlikely that traders will avail themselves of this permission unless the export duty and passport fees are reduced.

5. A new canal has been completed by the Afghans from Dehfurjin to Dalmardi.

Kerman.

1. Early in February four men entered the house of a Parsee merchant at Rafsinjan and after plundering his shop of 1,500 tomans worth of money and goods, fired at him with revolvers and left him for dead. The Parsee managed after some hours to reach a friend's house, where, being unable to speak, as one bullet had lodged in his throat, he wrote an account of the occurrence. The wounded man was brought into Kerman, where it was found that he had six bullets in his throat and jaw. Hopes are entertained of his recovery. Of late, both in Bam and in Kerman, Parsees have been maltreated by roughs. They appealed for protection to His Majesty's Consul, who obtained from the Deputy Governor a promise that he would do what he could.

2. During February Kerman continued in a disturbed condition, the Adil-es-Sultan's return to town leading to fresh disorders. The Ala-ul-Mulk, who had been appointed Governor, but was transferred to Ispahan while en route to Kerman, was succeeded by Sirdar Motazid. This appointment was unpopular, and led to the closing of the bazaars.

3. Two Hindu traders were, about the 15th February, robbed by five mounted men of 1,500 tomans worth of property a few miles from Malun.

4. Kabuter Khan, the second stage out on the Yezd road, has recently been looted and the post horses stolen.

5. Assad-ed-Dowleh, Governor of Baluchistan, arrived in Bam on the 7th February with some Khans and sixteen Baluchis.

Kermanshah.

1. The arrival of Seyed Akber, a reactionary Mullah, from Tehran led to some disturbances in the first week in March. The Acting Governor, however, restored order, and the Seyed was, in accordance with orders from Tehran, expelled and sent to Kerbela. His Majesty's Consul is of opinion that the Shah's supporters are numerous in Kermanshah, and that if civil war broke out the tribes would also be found on his side.

2. The Guran district has lately been in a state of disturbance owing to quarrels among the lieutenants of the hereditary Governor, Mansur-ul-Mulk.

3. The Vali of Pusht-i-Kuk was reported lately to be at Anarek, near Zorbatieh, with his troops.

4. Fath-es-Sultaneh, father-in-law of Prince Salar-ed-Dowleh, recently raided and captured the town of Khorremabad. He looted all the property of the Governor, who took refuge in the house of the Chief Priest. The Governor of Luristan is nephew of the present Prime Minister, Nizam-es-Sultaneh.

5. Ammunition and military stores continue to arrive at Khanikin from Bagdad. Early in March there were said to be 2,000 troops there, mainly Redifs.

Shiraz.

1. Sahib Ekhtiar, Governor-General of Fars, arrived at his post on the 8th February. In an interview with His Majesty's Consul, he stated that he thought the Kavam-ul-Mulk's return to Shiraz would cause trouble. The Kavam arrived on the 20th February from Tehran. On the 7th March the Kavam was shot in his own court-yard, five bullets striking him, and a sixth killing a servant who tried to save his master. The Kavam died about twenty minutes later. The assassin then shot himself in the abdomen, but was secured and imprisoned. Mr. Grahame went to the Kavam's house as soon as he received news of the affair. The two sons of the Kavam (Salar-es-Sultan and Nasr-ed-Dowleh) informed him that the murderer, one Nemetullah, had recently been in the service of Motamid-i-Divan as coachman. They threatened vengeance on Motamid-i-Divan as the author of the crime, and produced a piece of paper said to be taken from the pocket of the murderer on which was written "murderer of Nasr-ed-Dowleh." They declared they knew whose the writing was. Mr. Grahame begged them to check any

excesses on the part of their followers. The murderer died a few hours later, after having, according to Kavam's sons, confessed that Motamid-i-Divan and the Lari Seyed had instigated the crime. Mr. Grahame next interviewed the Governor-General, who was much perturbed, and practically abdicated his powers in favour of the Kavam's sons. Next day Mr. Grahame found the Governor-General rather less perturbed. His Excellency summoned Motamid-i-Divan to the palace for examination, and he was brought there after dark under a strong escort. On the 9th March, at the obsequies of the Kavam, Salar-es-Sultan was shot in the thigh, and one of the leading priests was also hit, it is said by the same bullet. The priest died the same day, but Salar-es-Sultan is recovering. One Seyed Ahmed Dastaki, a leader of the faction opposed to the Kavam, was said to have fired the shot. He was killed; his body was then gibbeted, drenched with oil and burned, and the remains were thrown in the town ditch. It is now asserted that the Seyed did not fire the shot. On the same day the Kavamis demanded the blood of the Motamid-i-Divan from the Governor-General, but only received an evasive reply. The 10th passed quietly, and by the 11th March public opinion, at first favourable to Salar-es-Sultan, had turned against him.

The Zil-es-Sultan having been appointed Governor-General of Fars, has left Tehran for Shiraz. Meanwhile the situation, if no worse, shows no signs of improvement.

2. The Bushire road, after being closed for a month by disturbances, was opened again on the 17th February. Posts are once more arriving in time.

PERSIAN GULF.

Bushire.

1. The money which was subscribed in Bushire last year and sent to Tehran towards the establishment of a National Bank has been returned to Bushire and paid back to the subscribers, the project having fallen through.

2. The Mollahs have formed an Enjumen of their own, called the Shaukat-ul-Islam. In the local Assembly the representatives of the Mollahs, of the mercantile community, and of the gentry have resigned. It is believed that the Governor is secretly working against the Assembly.

3. The local Agent of the Persian Foreign Office has been appointed to watch the interests of the Russian Consulate-General during the absence of the Consul-General.

4. The oppression by local Chiefs on the Bushire-Shiraz road of muleteers using that road has recently formed the subject of representations by His Majesty's Legation to the Persian Government.

5. The local Assembly having demanded from the Director of Customs the details of the revenue and expenditure of the Customs Department, the latter declined to furnish the information asked for. The local Assembly then referred the matter to Tehran. The Finance Minister, in reply, informed them that the matter was beyond their province, but they could ask the Governor to give them the information. This the Governor declined to do.

6. Herr Kurt Jung, German Commercial Delegate, arrived on the 11th February. His movements form the subject of a separate despatch.

Bunder Abbas.

It is stated that the local Assembly has made representations to Tehran, pointing out that the British Government has exclusive use of the telegraph line, and requesting the opening to the public of a telegraph office on the ground that the want of one is a hindrance to the trade of the port. This representation is stated to have originated with Sadie-es-Sultaneh acting at the instigation of the Russian Consul.

The Russian Minister has telegraphed to Sadid-es-Sultaneh not to interfere in matters that do not concern him.

Mohammerah.

1. Abdul Masih Antaki, editor of the "Al Amaran," of Cairo, who appears to have come on a begging expedition, received a money present from the Sheikh of Mohammerah. He was acquainted with Abdul Wahab Pasha, of Bussorah, but was afraid to go to Turkish territory for fear of being arrested.

2. Early in February a deputation from the Bakhtiari Khans visited the Sheikh to

assure him of their friendship and their desire to come to an understanding with him. All the Khans were represented. The Sheikh said he would make an agreement with them, and advised them to have a common policy and to secure the peace of their districts.

4. The Bakhtiari Ilkhani was in February collecting a force to make a retaliatory raid on the Kuhgelu tribe.

Ahwaz.

The Oil Syndicate has closed its works at Mamatain. The Indian guard has accordingly been posted at Maidan-i-Munaftun.

(Signed) C. B. STOKES, Major,
Military Attache.

[12650]

No. 64.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received April 13.)

(No. 76.)
Sir,

Tehran, March 27, 1908.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 68 of the 25th instant, I have the honour to transmit herewith copy of a despatch from Mr. Consul-General Wratislaw, reporting on the unofficial representations which he has made to Mohtashem-es-Sultaneh for the considerate treatment of Sunni Kurds in Persian territory. Mr. Wratislaw's action was taken at the instance of the Turkish frontier officer, who, on his departure from Urmia, professed to be apprehensive for the fate of Sunnis when he was no longer present to protect them.

I have, &c.
(Signed) CHARLES M. MARLING.

Inclosure in No. 64.

Consul-General Wratislaw to Mr. Marling.

(No. 5.)
Sir,

Urmi, March 6, 1908.

I HAVE the honour to report that, two days after the departure of the Turkish Commission, Memdough Bey, Turkish Consul at Khoi, who has been here for some little time hoping for his recognition by the Persian Government as Ottoman Representative in the district, brought me a letter from Taher Pasha, dated the 29th February (the day he left), of which the following is a translation:—

"Our Mussulman subjects say that just now they are in great danger. Although it was decided between the two Governments that our officials should have the right of intervention to prevent oppression of Sunnis, Persian subjects, who live in Kurdistan, you know what the Persians are like. They do not regard such things, but do just as they please. Also they refuse to recognize the mission of Memdough Bey, who has come here. Last night our subjects raised a great lament, so I thought of asking something of you till our return, or till orders come about Memdough Bey. With your permission I will explain it. As there is no one here now to protect our subjects, please do what you can, and your position allows, not officially but as an act of grace, to prevent their being harmed, should they request protection. Memdough Bey will give you details."

I told Memdough Bey that of course I had no right to interfere officially on behalf of Turkish subjects or Sunnis generally, but that I would advise Mohtashem-es-Sultaneh in a friendly way to do all in his power to prevent any annoyance to them. At the same time I remarked that nothing had come to my ears of a nature to justify Taher's fears on behalf of his co-religionists in the town, though I had heard of a recent attack on a party of Kurds returning to Soujboulak by the inhabitants of some Persian villages on the road, who had killed one or more and robbed the rest. Memdough Bey in reply insisted on the danger to which Sunnis were exposed at the present time, without, however, citing any particular instance in support of his assertion.

I called the same day on Mohtashem-es-Sultaneh, and, without mentioning Taher's appeal to me, spoke in general terms of the position of the Sunnis and the apprehensions under which they appeared to be labouring. I pointed out to him how

[1580]

Q

desirable it was that the frontier question should not be further complicated by any untoward incident connected with them, and suggested that it would be politic to show them special consideration under present circumstances.

Mohtashem assured me that he was fully alive to the exigencies of the situation, and that he had taken and would continue to take all possible precautions to prevent any molestation of Sunnis in the town. He had already had twenty of the villagers supposed to be concerned in the attack on the Soujboulak Kurds imprisoned, and had stationed soldiers in their villages to prevent the recurrence of such incidents.

I understand that Memdough Bey's record is such as to make the Persian Government unwilling to have him represent Turkish interests here at the present crisis. At the same time the existing Turkish Vice-Consul (as he calls himself, though he is only a correspondent) is a Nestorian, and carries no weight at all, and it is natural that the Porte should desire a more competent Representative.

The outrages of the Shekoik Kurds on the Salmas road have begun again with the approach of spring, and the soldiers sent to keep them in check seem unable to do so.

I have, &c.

(Signed) A. C. WRATISLAW.

[12651]

No. 65.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received April 13.)

(No. 77.)

Sir,

Tehran, March 27, 1908.

THOUGH the past four weeks have not produced any very marked alteration in the general situation, such change as is apparent is, I regret to say, for the worse rather than for the better.

After the unsuccessful attempt on his life, the Shah, in spite of the advice which is alleged to have been urged on him by some of the reactionaries at the Palace, has remained apparently passive, and his relations with the Assembly have been accompanied by less friction than at any other period. It is too much to hope that this is the result of any change of His Majesty's feelings towards his Parliament; it is rather the result of the *attentat*, and perhaps also of the consciousness that the "Mejliss" is becoming so discredited and unpopular that it may die a natural death. The Assembly has continued to lose ground in public esteem, partly on account of its own inherent inefficiency, but partly also owing to the ill-judged efforts of the President to improve its working. His preference for conducting business in the privacy of Committees has extended to the ordinary sittings of the House, of which at present about one in three are held with closed doors; and he has further issued regulations for the admission of the public. As he possesses considerable authority with the Deputies, this apparent design to veil his proceedings from the public gaze, produces a general disposition to believe that Ehtesham-es-Sultaneh is no longer the ardent patriot, but is working in other interests, either those of the Shah or his own. He has consequently become exceedingly unpopular, and a few days ago it seemed quite on the cards that he would be forced to resign.

Possibly the event which may have the most effect on the situation in Tehran is the removal for the time being of Zil-es-Sultan by his appointment as Governor of Fars. There can be no doubt that there is a certain party here who look to his accession to power in one way or another as a possible solution of Persia's difficulties, and that he readily lent himself to the idea. He was consequently an object of distrust to the Shah, who was anxious to be rid of his dangerous relative and pressed him to go to Europe for a season. Zil-es-Sultan possibly meant to do so, for he went so far as to ask the Russian Minister to get a ship of war placed at his disposal to convey him from Enzeli to Petrovsk, whilst he also came to pay me a visit to announce his impending departure. However, the next morning I received news which convinced me that His Imperial Highness had abandoned the idea of leaving Persia, and the rumours that he was to supersede Sahib Ekhtiar at Shiraz left no doubt about the reason for his change of plans. I think His Imperial Highness was really desirous of obtaining the appointment—he is said to have paid Nizam-es-Sultaneh 16,000 tomans for it—but hesitated to jeopardize his game at the capital by withdrawing to a distant province. When at last he made up his mind, he took his departure most abruptly, in fact it was not generally known till the following day. His Imperial Highness is travelling with extraordinary rapidity, having reached Ispahan from Tehran in four days. I took no step to influence him one way or the

other, though it is probable that a word of advice from the Legation would have hastened his decision; on the whole I hope that the appointment will turn out to be the best in the circumstances.

The confusion which followed the murder of Kavam-ul-Mulk in Shiraz showed that Sahib Ekhtiar had not the qualities necessary to govern that turbulent town; the Governor in fact completely lost his head and I think it is not too much to say what is hardly sufficiently brought out in the necessarily brief account of the occurrences given in the Monthly Summary, that it was primarily owing to the energy and tact displayed by Mr. Consul Grabame, and his personal influence in the town, that serious fighting did not ensue. In quieter times Sahib Ekhtiar might make an excellent Governor but as he is of a timorous disposition and has not the money to find the troops which the Government had been unable to send him, I thought it better not to comply with his request for the support of the Legation to maintain him in his office, and merely urged the Government to take such measures as they could to maintain order. Zil-es-Sultan at all events possesses many of the qualities which Sahib Ekhtiar lacks: he is very wealthy, can probably raise a sufficient force of men from among his villages at Ispahan to enforce respect for his authority, and is reputed to have been a strong Governor. Conditions have, however, so much changed, that it may turn out that what passed for strength is merely the tyranny of a man wielding absolute power, and I regard the Zil's success in Shiraz as by no means certain. Should he fail, the Persian Government will find it exceedingly difficult to discover a successor to him.

From the general summary it will be seen, that though there have been no serious disorders, a condition of peaceful anarchy continues, and there is no sign that the Central Government is any more able than formerly to enforce its authority.

I have, &c.

(Signed) CHARLES M. MARLING.

[12593]

No. 66.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received April 13.)

(No. 182.)

Sir,

St. Petersburg, April 6, 1908.

I HAVE the honour to transmit herewith copy of an *aide-mémoire* which I have received from the Ministry for Foreign Affairs in regard to the subsidy which has been granted to the German school at Tehran. The Memorandum states that the subsidy is provided for out of the Privy Purse of the Shah, and that therefore a protest on the part of the Governments of Great Britain and of Russia would appear to be superfluous for the moment, but that if in the future the customs revenues were pledged to the above object there would then be full justification for representations being made. From Mr. Marling's despatch No. 53 of the 15th ultimo it would seem that the payment of the subsidy is to be made out of the customs revenues, and, if you consider such a course desirable, I might acquaint M. Isvolsky with the discovery which was made by Abbas Kuli Khan and suggest that the two Governments should convey to the Persian Government a warning of the nature indicated in your telegram No. 83 of the 30th March. You may, on the other hand, be of opinion that the Persian Government have already been sufficiently awakened by Mr. Marling to a sense of their responsibilities and of the risks which they may incur by a continuance of their present tendency to subserve German interests, and that it may be sufficient if I were simply to acquaint M. Isvolsky with what passed between the Mushir-ed-Dowleh and Mr. Marling, and subsequently with Abbas Kuli Khan.

I have, &c.

(Signed) A. NICOLSON.

Inclosure in No. 66.

Memorandum communicated by the Russian Ministry for Foreign Affairs to British Embassy.

IL paraît que la question d'un subside annuel de 7,000 tomans pour l'école Allemande de Téhéran, formant l'objet de l'aide-mémoire de l'Ambassade Britannique

du 10 (23) Mars, a provoqué de vifs débats au Médjliss et que l'Assemblée, ne se bornant pas à décliner ce projet, a énergiquement protesté contre une pareille décision prise à son insu. Afin de sortir d'une manière ou d'une autre de la position difficile dans laquelle il s'était trouvé, le Président de la Chambre a déclaré aux Députés que le subside serait prélevé par Sa Majesté le Schah sur ses sommes personnelles.

Dans ces conditions une protestation de la part de la Grande-Bretagne et de la Russie devient superflue, semble-t-il; mais s'il était décidé à l'avenir d'affecter à cette fin les revenus douaniers, les deux États seraient évidemment fondés à protester contre une pareille mesure, se basant sur les droits qu'ils possèdent sur ces revenus.

Saint-Petersbourg, le 20 Mars (2 Avril), 1908.

[12594]

No. 67.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received April 13.)

(No. 183.)

St. Petersburg, April 7, 1908.

Sir,
MR. MARLING was good enough to repeat to me his telegram of to-day's date relative to the desire of the Persian Government for the erection of a second wire between Tehran and Shahrud, and to the favourable opportunity which appeared to be offered for effecting the exchange of the telegraph lines in Persia.

I hardly expect that M. Isvolsky is yet in a position to reply in detail to the Memorandum which I communicated to him on the 23rd ultimo, but I thought that it would not be inopportune to remind him of the suggestion which had been made that the method of obtaining the consent of the Persian Government to the proposed exchange should be left to M. de Hartwig and Mr. Marling to determine. I consequently addressed a private letter to him, drawing his attention to that point, and at the same time informing him of the desire of the Persian Government to erect a second wire to Shahrud, and of the opinion expressed by the two Representatives that the moment was now favourable for approaching the authorities at Tehran. I added that while M. de Hartwig and Mr. Marling were treating with the Persian Government, he would no doubt be able to deal with the questions detailed in my above-mentioned Memorandum, and that therefore the exchange could be effected without delay as soon as the Persian Government had notified their concurrence with the general principle.

I submit that it would be well to await a reply from M. Isvolsky to the Memorandum which was communicated to him on the 23rd ultimo before any action is taken as to the details of the exchange.

I have, &c.
(Signed) A. NICOLSON.

[12834]

No. 68.

India Office to Foreign Office.—(Received April 13.)

THE Under-Secretary of State for India presents his compliments to the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and, by direction of Mr. Secretary Morley, forwards herewith, for the information of the Secretary of State, copy of a telegram to the Viceroy, dated the 7th instant, relative to the capture of the Dayir pirates.

India Office, April 11, 1908.

Inclosure in No. 68.

Mr. Morley to Government of India.

(Telegraphic.) P.

India Office, April 7, 1908.

DAYIR pirates. Your telegram of the 17th ultimo.

Our appreciation of services of Khan of Bander Rig will be conveyed to Persian Government by His Majesty's Minister at Tehran, who will let Major Cox know when this has been done, so that Khan may be informed by the latter.

[12878]

No. 69.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received April 13.)

(No. 71.)

St. Petersburg, April 13, 1908.

(Telegraphic.) P.

EXCHANGE of telegraphs. My Memorandum of the 23rd March.

I have received an unsatisfactory reply from the Russian Government. It agrees to the arrangements proposed in regard to transfer of Tehran-Meshed line, as they are, it is observed, in complete harmony with Article I of the Arrangement of the 31st August, 1907, which states that the line should pass to the Russian Administration on the same conditions in which it is under the British Administration. The admission, therefore, of British employés to the use of the line is but a logical consequence naturally flowing from the principle established in the above Article.

As regards the Meshed-Seistan line, the Memorandum observes that our proposals in regard to the withdrawal of Russian employés from the section south of Khaf are not in conformity with Article II of Arrangement of the 31st August, although the said withdrawal is compensated by the proposed removal of British employés north of Khaf. But the Memorandum argues that as the line is to be handed over by the Russian Administration on the same conditions as at present exist, and as British employés are at present allowed to use the line, the Russian employés should therefore be equally allowed access when the line passes to the British Administration, especially as the Memorandum of the 23rd March admits the same principle in regard to the Tehran-Meshed line in respect to British employés having access to it when it passes under Russian control. Memorandum considers that the most equitable arrangement would be, therefore, for British employés to have access at fixed hours to section north of Khaf, and Russian employés to have similar access to section south of Khaf, as has been proposed in Memorandum of the 23rd March for the Tehran-Meshed line.

The Russian interpretation of the above-mentioned two Articles of the Arrangement of the 31st August, 1907, is, in my opinion, incorrect. The retention of signallers was in no wise contemplated in the expression "same conditions," which referred to upkeep, &c., and arrangements with the Persian Government. The withdrawal of all employés was, I venture to point out, suggested by our original proposals (see inclosure to my despatch No. 132 of the 13th March, 1907), and the removal of signallers as constituting one of the causes of friction was always our idea, and one which I certainly considered that the Russian Government shared. I would call your attention in regard to this point to the Memorandum from the Russian Government, and especially to the first three paragraphs of it, which was inclosed in my despatch No. 317 of the 14th June last.

I do not propose to enter into a discussion now on the subject, as I shall shortly be able to consult with you personally in London, and as the question of the retention of British signallers at Meshed and Tehran is still under discussion with the Government of India, but I fear that our case on this point has been weakened by the suggestions contained in the Memorandum of the 23rd March as to their retention.

[12818]

No. 70.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received April 13.)

(No. 98.)

Tehran, April 13, 1908.

(Telegraphic.) *En clair.*

MINISTRY resigned.

[12819]

No. 71.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received April 13.)

(No. 99.)

Tehran, April 13, 1908.

(Telegraphic.) P.

EXCHANGE of telegraph lines, incidence of expenses, and information respecting offices between Khaf and Seistan.

Discrepancies in the accounts given by His Majesty's Consuls in Seistan and Meshed have prevented me from replying sooner to your telegram No. 66 of 23rd March.

[1580]

R

The following information, the accuracy of which Major Sykes confirms, has now been received from Major Kennion :—

1. *Khaf*.—The Russian Inspector has a dwelling-house, for which he may pay rent, and which he uses as office connected with the line. It is a Persian office at rent of 300 krans per annum.

2. The office at *Buniabad* is the property of the Government.

3. *Kain*.—A Persian office at a rent of 360 krans per annum.

4. *Birjand*.—Same conditions as above, but the rent is only 240 krans per annum.

5. *Sarbisha*.—Also same as foregoing, but only 72 krans is paid for rent.

6. *Shusp*.—The office belongs to the Government of Persia. The same room is used by the Russian Inspector, who also lives on the premises.

7. *Neh*.—One hundred krans is paid by Persians in rent.

8. *Bandau*.—The office here belongs to the State.

9. *Seistan*.—The office is also Government property, and the Russians have a room in it.

I am informed that the Persians pay the office rents.

The Russians have no separate offices apart from the first-named exception, i.e., the building at *Khaf*.

With reference to the payment of the office rents, Major Sykes telegraphs that, according to his information, the Russians refund to the Sipahdar the money paid for rents by the Persians.

[12627]

No. 72.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir A. Nicolson.

(No. 100.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Foreign Office, April 14, 1908.

SUBVENTION to German school at Tehran.

With reference to your despatch No. 182 and to despatch No. 53 from His Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires at Tehran.

I consider that, as there is now no doubt that the subvention is secured on the customs, joint action is desirable. I would, therefore, propose that instructions should be sent to the Representatives of the two Powers to inform the Persian Government that in future, before the customs revenues are pledged, we shall, in virtue of the priority of our lien on those revenues, expect to be consulted, and that unless this is done the two Governments will be forced to take steps in concert in order to provide for the safety of their interests.

We prefer, in view of the opinion expressed by Mr. Marling, that all reference to M. Bizot or to the German school should be eliminated.

[9763]

No. 73.

Sir Edward Grey to Mr. Marling.

(No. 57.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, April 14, 1908.

ON the receipt of Sir C. Spring-Rice's despatch No. 152 of the 16th July, 1907, relative to the claim of the Persian Transport Company against the Bakhtiari Khans for sums due in connection with the Ahwaz-Isfahan road, I caused a letter to be addressed to the Company, embodying his observations on the statement of accounts submitted by them in their communication of the 17th May, 1907.

I transmit to you herewith copy of the Company's reply to that letter, from which it appears that they adhere in all respects to the attitude which they originally adopted on this question.*

As regards the accounts for expenses incurred for inspection and repair of bridges, and for amounts due for instalments and interest on capital expenditure on construction, you will observe that the Company renew their complaint respecting the refusal of His Majesty's Government to sanction the calculation of interest at a higher rate than 6 per cent. They state that they are unable to find in Article 2 of the Agreement for the construction of the road any provision altering the rate of interest paid on overdue

* See Part XIII, No. 394.

[12972]

No. 71^o.*The Imperial Bank of Persia to Foreign Office.—(Received April 14.)*

Dear Sir,

25, Abchurch Lane, London, April 13, 1908.

SIR THOMAS JACKSON has just called, and asks me to write to you regarding the Customs of Kermanshah.

The Bank is supposed to receive the customs receipts at Kermanshah and to transfer them to Tehran for the credit of the Persian Government. We cannot, however, be sure that we receive the full amount collected at Kermanshah, and we are unable to say what proportion of the amount the Bank is permitted to retain. In the month of February last we were informed by the chief manager of the Bank in Tehran that a sum of krans 470,732.80, which was credited to the account of Haji Hussein Aga Amin-i-Zarb in October and November last year, was paid out of the Kermanshah customs receipts.

I remain, &c.
(Signed) G. NEWELL,
Manager.

[1580]

R^o

amounts, and they point out that that rate, in Persia, is usually from 12 to 15 per cent. so that by acquiescing in the lower rate on which His Majesty's Government insist they would simply be offering to the Khans a strong inducement to continue in their debt.

It is doubtless true that the Article cited does not contain any specific mention of overdue amounts, but neither are such amounts specifically excepted from its operation, and it would therefore appear that His Majesty's Government cannot do otherwise than adhere to their refusal to permit the charge of a higher rate of interest than 6 per cent., in spite of the effect which this decision is likely, in the opinion of the Company, to produce on the attitude of the Khans towards their liabilities.

As regards the charge for repairing and painting bridges in 1904, they protest against the refusal of His Majesty's Government to permit interest to be demanded on this account, on the ground that it has never been presented to the Khans, and they point out that the responsibility for the omission to present it rests, not upon themselves, but upon Mr. Preece, who was at that time His Majesty's Consul-General at Isfahan.

It is true that Mr. Preece refused to present this account, and the reason for his refusal, as shown by his despatch to Sir A. Hardinge, No. 57 of the 30th December, 1904, was that he considered the charge excessive. Sir C. Spring-Rice and His Majesty's Vice-Consul at Ahwaz considered, however, as shown in the former's despatch under reply, that no exception could be taken to the several items of the account, and the Company were informed on the 10th October that these were unobjectionable. As you will observe, note is taken of this statement in their present letter.

This inconsistency in the attitude of His Majesty's Government is unfortunate and places them in an embarrassing position. They must either admit to the Company that they refused to present to the Khans an account, the items of which they now recognize to be reasonable, or they must urge the Khans to pay interest on a sum which they were not given the opportunity of paying when it first fell due.

The interest at the rate of 6 per cent., sanctioned by His Majesty's Government would appear to amount to about 60%, and you are aware that the account has now been presented to the Khans without it.

In these circumstances the best course to pursue for the present would appear to take no further action until the Khans have paid the account as presented to them, when the Company may be expected to reopen the question.

As regards the interest and instalments claimed on the 3,000% spent by the Company on the road in excess of the sum provided for in the Agreement, it would be difficult for His Majesty's Government to recede from the position which they have taken up.

The Company do not, apparently, contend that the consent of the Khans was obtained to their proceedings in this respect, and must therefore be held to have expended at their own risk, any sum laid out without that consent, even though this may have been done, as stated, in the best interests of the Khans. Any attempts to induce those Chiefs to admit a moral liability in respect of the payment of this account, such as the Company desire should be made, would appear to have but little prospect of success.

The Company renew and support, by an elaborate argument, their plea for permission to adopt a sterling basis in their transactions with the Khans.

They were informed on the 12th February, 1904, that the Khans were within their rights, as defined by the Agreement, in insisting on payment in Persian currency; and though in their reply, dated the 31st March of the same year, they state that they never would have consented to the adoption of a silver basis (*i.e.*, to payment in krans), they do not appear to have repudiated a gold basis in Persian currency (*i.e.*, payment in tomans); and their former account, presented on the 6th April, 1904, to His Majesty's Government, was calculated on that basis.

There would, therefore, appear to be no reason why His Majesty's Government should abandon the attitude which they have adopted on this point.

Finally, the Company decline to waive their right of receiving payment at Ahwaz, though they give no reasons for their refusal.

I have to request you to furnish me with your observations on the points raised by the Company in their letter, and particularly on the question at issue in respect of the charge for repairing and painting bridges in 1904.

I am, &c.
(Signed) E. GREY.

[9757]

No. 74.

Foreign Office to Persian Transport Company.

Sir,

Foreign Office, April 14, 1908.

I AM directed by Secretary Sir Edward Grey to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 18th ultimo, relative to certain suggestions made by you in connection with the Ahwaz-Ispahan road, and the remarks thereon offered by His Majesty's Vice-Consul at Ahwaz.

I am to inform you, in reply, that a copy of your communication will be forwarded to His Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires at Tehran for his information and that of Captain Lorimer.

I am, &c.
(Signed) LOUIS MALLET.

[9763]

No. 75.

Foreign Office to Persian Transport Company.

Sir,

Foreign Office, April 14, 1908.

I AM directed by Secretary Sir Edward Grey to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 19th ultimo, relative to the claim of your Company against the Bakhtiari Khans for sums due in connection with the Ahwaz-Ispahan road.

I am to inform you, in reply, that a copy of your communication will be forwarded to His Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires at Tehran for any observations which he may have to offer upon it.

I am, &c.
(Signed) LOUIS MALLET.

[13097]

No. 76.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received April 15.)

(No. 100.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Tehran, April 15, 1908.

SIR A. NICOLSON'S telegram No. 71. Exchange of telegraphs.

We propose to request our telegraph directors to broach question at once with the Persian Government, as the Russian Minister sees no reason for delaying matter.

Have I your approval in this course?

[12819]

No. 77.

Foreign Office to India Office.

Sir,

Foreign Office, April 15, 1908.

WITH reference to my letter of the 4th instant relative to the exchange of the control of telegraph lines in Persia between His Majesty's and the Russian Governments, I am directed by Secretary Sir Edward Grey to transmit to you herewith decypher of a telegram from His Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires at Tehran relative to the incidence of expenses in the Meshed-Seistan line.*

I am to state that, in view of the proposal made in the letter above referred to to approve the suggestion of His Majesty's Ambassador at St. Petersburg to make no communication to the Russian Government respecting their control over that line, but to await the particulars furnished by them on the subject, Sir E. Grey is disposed to take no action on Mr. Marling's telegram, which will, however, be of use for purposes of comparison with the Russian statement when it is received.

I am, &c.
(Signed) LOUIS MALLET.

[13097]

No. 76*.

Sir Edward Grey to Mr. Marling.

(No. 80.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Foreign Office, April 15, 1908.

I APPROVE course suggested in your telegram No. 100 of to-day's date with regard to the exchange of telegraph lines.

[12878]

No. 78.

Foreign Office to India Office.

Sir,

Foreign Office, April 15, 1908.

WITH reference to my letters of the 4th and 7th instant relative to the proposed exchange of the control of telegraph lines in Persia between His Majesty's and the Russian Governments, I am directed by Secretary Sir Edward Grey to transmit to you herewith decypher of a telegram from His Majesty's Ambassador at St. Petersburg,* reporting that he has received from the Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs a reply to his Memorandum of the 23rd ultimo, which in some respects is not satisfactory.

The point in M. Isvolsky's communication to which Sir A. Nicolson takes exception relates to the retention by each Power, after the exchange, of signallers on the line controlled by the other, to which the Russian Government attach importance, and which they consider to be implied in the Agreement signed at St. Petersburg on the 31st August, 1907.

As this question is now under consideration by the Government of India, and as Sir A. Nicolson will shortly have the opportunity of consulting with Sir E. Grey personally with regard to it, he proposes to abstain for the present from further discussion of the point with the Russian Government.

In view of these considerations, and of the fact that the settlement of the details of the exchange by negotiation at St. Petersburg is not in itself a matter of great urgency so long as the consent of the Persian Government to the transaction can be obtained at Tehran, Sir E. Grey is disposed, subject to the concurrence of Mr. Secretary Morley, to follow the course suggested by Sir A. Nicolson.

I am, &c.

(Signed) LOUIS MALLET.

[13229]

No. 79.

Memorandum communicated by Mr. J. D. Rees, M.P., April 16, 1908.

THERE has always appeared to me to be considerable doubt whether the arrangements between the Persian and the Russian Governments in restraint of railways, and the undertaking of Nasr-ud-Din Shah to grant us a Railway Concession in the south, if one were granted to Russia in the north, is still valid. We may act upon this assumption, but Russia and Persia may not, and I have fears, which are shared by others interested in Persia, lest now that the country between the Gulf and the Russian line is declared neutral, somebody may obtain, or be put to obtain, a Concession, very likely of a bogus character, for a railway or a road from Bushire, Lingah, or Bunder Abbas towards Shiraz, Yezd, or Kerman. There is already a Concession for certain roads, including Ispahan to Bushire, and for "trains Renard" all over Persia. A Persian holds this, and has power to dispose of one-third of it to foreigners. At any rate, those interested in Persia would feel very much easier in their minds if applications were made for Concessions on our behalf, which would at any rate block any application preferred on behalf of the Russians, who have come so far south, or on behalf of the Germans, who are striving to raise the capital to bring their railway on to and beyond Bagdad. If the Convention is to be pigeon-holed and the Russians allowed to work quietly down to the Gulf through the neutral zone our position will be hopeless. Something definite should be done in the way of occupying the ground in South Persia, and pegging out our claims while the door is still open.

The Persian Transport Company, a British concern, which already has Concessions and guarantees between Mohammerah, Ispahan, and Tehran, ought to be encouraged to complete their system of communications as soon as possible. They might also apply for the necessary Concessions to the south-east of the present sphere of their activities. Means of transport should be improved by the construction of roads, or eventually, in the distant future, perhaps railways, in the British and neutral zone from the Gulf littoral towards Ispahan, Yezd, and Kerman.

It is desirable, moreover, so far as is feasible, that the general finances of the country should be improved, and the customs and land revenue placed upon a better basis. Probably this might be done by means of co-operation between the British and Russian banks. Sir George Mackenzie suggested to Sir Charles Hardinge that if these banks co-operated, and contented themselves with banking profits, properly secured, a barrier would be raised against the possible intervention and intrigues of a third nation.

The Concession for a good trunk road from Bunder Abbas via Kerman to Yezd appears to be very necessary. Otherwise the trade of these centres will be diverted northwards. It should be possible to arrange with the Persian Government that after a term of years the roads should become their property, in return for a guarantee of interest upon the capital expended. This interest could be provided out of the surplus customs revenue, for improved communication would doubtless provide a surplus. A concurrent guarantee by the British Government would doubtless be required. The risk would not be very great, for the Persian guarantee, if unpaid, could be carried to their debit, and remain a charge upon the roads, being repaid prior to their being handed over at the termination of the Concession.

Some steps of this nature are necessary if the Convention is to result in any commercial advantage, or rather if advantage is not to be taken of it to our own detriment. In the present condition of Persia it would be hopeless to expect capital to be invested there without a modest guarantee; but as we have lost so much for want of granting a small loan on very good security on a former occasion, it is possible that the Government will be willing to rise to the occasion now that fewer books are, at proportionately higher prices, for sale. The action of Russia in the Middle East and in the Far East is in great contrast with our own; but of course they have not to go to Parliament for sanction for their expenditure, or, at any rate, have not had to do so in the past. If once there are proper communications in the south, the development of the north by Russia will do us no harm, and might indeed result in good; but unless communications are improved, trade will surely be diverted to the northern outlet.

(Signed) J. D. REES.

Travellers' Club, London,
April 11, 1908.

[13176]

No. 80.

India Office to Foreign Office.—(Received April 16.)

Sir, I AM directed to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 10th instant, as to the proposed exchange of telegraph lines in Persia, and of your subsequent letter forwarding copies of the telegrams on the subject noted in the margin.*

In reply I am to say that Mr. Secretary Morley concurs in the view that no objection need be taken to the Persian request for the erection of a second wire to Sharud, and that the occasion may be taken by the Russian and British Representatives at Tehran to approach the Persian Government with a view to obtaining their consent to the exchange of the lines. It is noted that Mr. Marling was instructed by telegram No. 78 of the 11th instant to concert with the Russian Minister as to the steps to be taken.

As regards the reply of the Russian Government, reported in Sir A. Nicolson's telegram No. 71 to the Memorandum of the 23rd ultimo, Mr. Morley sees no objection to Sir A. Nicolson's proposal not to raise the question of the retention of the signallers with the Russian Government till he has discussed it here during his coming visit. The Government of India have been informed by telegraph of the substance of the Russian reply.

As regards action at Tehran in respect of the details of the exchange—apart from the steps necessary to obtain the consent of the Persian Government—Mr. Morley assumes that nothing will be done till the question raised by the Russian reply is decided.

I am, &c.
(Signed) A. GODLEY.

* Nos. 31, 37, 38, 39, and 69.

[13267]

No. 81.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received April 16.)

(No. 72.)

(Telegraphic.)

St. Petersburg, April 16, 1908.

I HAVE received Memorandum from Russian Government stating that Russian Minister at Tehran has telegraphed that Imperial Bank of Persia has sequestered customs revenues of Kermanshah as a guarantee of sums due to it by the Persian Government.

Russian Government state that these revenues are amongst those which guarantee loans concluded in Russia, and that sequestration injures rights of Russian bank. Moreover, Kermanshah is in Russian zone, and customs revenue therefore should only be affected to Russian loans. It would be regrettable if one Contracting Party does not conform to provisions of Convention of the 31st August, as it might form precedent for third Powers to mortgage Persian customs revenues, which are understood to be exclusively effected to British and Russian loans. If Kermanshah revenues are to serve as guarantee for payments to Imperial Bank, a portion of revenues of Persian Gulf customs would be set free, and Persian Government might take advantage of this to conclude some financial transaction which might be detrimental to both Great Britain and Russia. Memorandum adds that Russian Minister has drawn attention of British Chargé d'Affaires to the danger of some such combination, and has suggested it would be equitable if Imperial Bank sequestered revenues of Gulf customs and handed over to Russian bank revenues of Kermanshah. British Chargé d'Affaires is said to have expressed his entire concurrence with this view.

Russian Government consider justice of the observations of Russian Minister is unquestionable, and would be glad to have opinion of His Majesty's Government on the subject.

(Sent to Tehran.)

[13202]

No. 82.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received April 16.)

(No. 101.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Tehran, April 16, 1908.

GERMAN schools. Your telegram No. 100 to Sir A. Nicolson.

If, as I gather is contemplated, joint communication is to be verbal, Russian Minister is quite prepared to act as proposed, but he is rather averse to a joint note, as he thinks that such a step on the part of Russia would hardly yet be justified by the circumstances.

A joint verbal communication may well, I think, produce the desired effect, but I venture to submit that a note in the sense suggested in the third paragraph of my telegram No. 94 will better improve our own position.

[13270]

No. 83.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received April 16.)

(No. 102.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Tehran, April 16, 1908.

OXIDE Concession on Island of Siri.

I have received following telegram, dated the 14th April, from His Majesty's Consul-General at Bushire:—

"Haji Mirza Ali Asgar, son of Haji Ali Akbar, of Manchester, has, I learn, been instructed to endeavour, in his personal capacity as Persian subject, to obtain a Concession from the Persian Government on the Island of Siri for the extraction of red oxide. Although obtained by a Persian subject, if it is intended that the British firm of Haji Ali Akbar and Sons, Limited, of Manchester, will exploit the Concession, British interests will presumably be benefited. Question of status of the island would, on the other hand, be affected by grant of Concession, as we have not definitely conceded to Persia sovereignty over it. If it is now decided to let applicant for Concession take his chance and not to intervene at Tehran, I venture to suggest that a specific guarantee that the

Concession will be controlled by them as a British Company, in British interests, and will not be transferred to, nor shared by, any foreigner should be obtained from the Manchester firm."

The Persian Government are showing a disposition to dispute our right to protect this British firm.

[13176] No. 84.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir A. Nicolson.

(No. 103.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Foreign Office, April 16, 1908.

EXCHANGE of Persian telegraphs.

As suggested by you in the last paragraph of your telegram No. 71 of the 13th instant, the question of signallers may be allowed to stand over.

[13176] No. 85.

Sir Edward Grey to Mr. Marling.

(No. 81.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Foreign Office, April 16, 1908.

EXCHANGE of Persian telegraphs.

Duplication of wire to Shahrud will meet with no objection from us.

Reference is to your telegram No. 91 of the 7th instant.

[13176] No. 86.

Sir Edward Grey to Mr. Marling.

(No. 83.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Foreign Office, April 16, 1908.

EXCHANGE of Persian telegraphs.

With reference to the telegram No. 66 of the 8th instant from His Majesty's Ambassador at St. Petersburg.

It would be better to leave details of exchange for discussion at St. Petersburg. No action should be taken by you beyond approaching Persian Government with a view to obtaining their consent.

[13267] No. 87.

Sir Edward Grey to Mr. Marling.

(No. 84.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Foreign Office, April 16, 1908.

KERMANSHAH customs receipts.

The Russian contention, reported in the telegram No. 72 of the 16th instant, from His Majesty's Ambassador at St. Petersburg, seems to be well founded.

You should try to come to an arrangement for securing the payments to the Imperial Bank on some port in the south. Please report by telegraph which port you consider most suitable.

Payments on the Russian loan are not now, I presume, being effected by diversion of the Bushire customs.

[13430]

No. 88.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received April 18.)

(No. 103.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Tehran, April 18, 1908.

EXCHANGE of telegraphs. Telegram No. 71 from Sir A. Nicolson.

Following addressed to Indian Government by His Majesty's Consul in Seistan:—

"Retention of Russian signallers on Seistan-Khaf section, and British signallers at Meshed and Tehran. Your telegram No. 217.

"I consider it desirable that the Russian signallers on the section between Seistan and Khaf should be withdrawn, but it would, in my opinion, be preferable, if this can only be secured by the withdrawal of our signallers from Meshed and Tehran, that the Russian signallers should remain, otherwise we should be entirely dependent on Persian signallers at Meshed and Turbat-i-Haidari. Our control would only commence at Khaf, and the linking up of Seistan with Central Persia line would not therefore help matter as regards Meshed and Turbat-i-Haidari.

"The presence of Russian signallers would not be a serious evil, provided that, after the exchange has taken place, Russian privileges on the Seistan line are strictly limited to those we have now, and we, on the other hand, are put in full possession of their rights.

"The signaller at Tehran is at present subject to Indo-European Department rules, and is not a Government employé like those on the line between Meshed and Seistan. (See my diary, 28th January, 1907.) This now prejudices our position on the Tehran-Meshed line to some extent.

"It would be preferable that the signaller at Tehran should be directly under the Legation and free from the above restrictions if, after the exchange has taken place, we maintain our signallers at Tehran and Meshed."

[13443]

No. 89.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received April 18.)

(No. 104.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Tehran, April 18, 1908.

EXCHANGE of telegraphs. My immediately preceding telegram, and telegram No. 71 from St. Petersburg.

His Majesty's Consul-General at Meshed telegraphs following:—

"Withdrawal of signallers from Tehran-Meshed line. Your telegram No. 217. The Russians have for many years maintained their own employés on Meshed-Tehran line, which we controlled without any noticeable disadvantage to us. Communications for all Consulates would be much weakened, and cypher messages most difficult, if our men are withdrawn from Tehran, Meshed, Turbat-i-Haidari. I am of opinion that, if Russia intends to observe Convention, the isolation of our Consulates and Agencies is more open to objection than Russian signallers in Seistan. Telegram from Seistan No. 106c has my full concurrence. In view of Persian incapacity, I think Russians will consider retention of telegraphists by both Powers as reasonable, if not necessary."

[13451]

No. 90.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received April 18.)

(No. 105.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Tehran, April 18, 1908.

EXCHANGE of telegraphs. My telegrams Nos. 103 and 104 of the 18th instant.

Views of His Majesty's Consuls at Meshed and Seistan have my concurrence, but I would venture to offer an observation with reference to last paragraph of Kennion's telegram.

I see no advantage in signallers being under Legation, and it is at request of Legation, in pursuance of policy of non-interference in internal politics, that present supposed restrictions are imposed on signallers of the Indo-European Telegraph Department.

[13452]

No. 91.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received April 18.)

(No. 106.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Teheran, April 18, 1908.

SIR A. NICOLSON'S telegram No. 72 and your telegram No. 84 of the 16th instant. Russian Bank Loans.

It is evidently the object of the Russians to obtain receipts of the Kermanshah customs for service of Russian Bank's advances in current account. It appears to me that the argument is misleading. The Russian lien on customs would appear, according to the Memorandum, to be in respect of advances of Russian Bank in current account as well as of Russian State loans, whereas the latter only are so secured, and I understand that Articles 4 and 5 of the Convention apply to them. The revenues from other northern customs amply suffice for service of State loans, and so long as these are regularly maintained as heretofore the revenues of Kermanshah are free, and by accepting them we are in no way violating the Convention.

The Russian Minister's statement that I agreed to proposal is incorrect. I merely expressed concurrence in the opinion that if Imperial Bank of Persia could get security on Gulf customs, instead of Kermanshah receipts, our position there might be strengthened against possible German financial schemes by such an arrangement. I will see M. Hartwig and correct misapprehension with a view to keeping Russian Bank out of Kermanshah. I suggested that the Russian Financial Agent and the Manager of the Imperial Bank of Persia might see if some arrangement could not be found which would be agreeable to both banks. To this the Russian Minister agreed, but there has been no discussion as yet.

Our position, in the opinion of the Manager of the Imperial Bank of Persia, is weak. There is no written Agreement that the Kermanshah customs should be for service of the bank, but only a verbal understanding which was first made with M. Naus that one-half of the receipts (this was last year increased to the whole) should be affected to service of the advances of the Imperial Bank of Persia. Under Russian pressure this arrangement could at any moment be terminated, and, unless I opposed it, which I presume is out of the question, the privilege of the Imperial Bank of Persia could be transferred to the Russian Bank.

It would be serious for the bank to lose the Kermanshah customs, and it will be difficult to get the Persian Government to consent to similarly ear-marking Bushire in its favour. Except at Bushire, the Imperial Bank of Persia have no bank in the Gulf, and besides Bushire is the only suitable port, as receipts of all the Gulf ports, including Mohammerah, pass through it.

It is very doubtful, I think, if the revenues of Bushire were ever diverted to service of Russian loans. A native banker for a time transmitted them to Tehran, which probably accounts for that supposition.

If Imperial Bank of Persia is forced to relinquish Kermanshah customs, I would point out that all Russian loans will be practically secured, whereas our interests of a similar nature will be imperilled correspondingly.

[12625]

No. 92.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir F. Bertie.

(No. 171.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, April 18, 1908.

I TRANSMIT to your Excellency herewith copy of a despatch from His Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires at Tehran,* suggesting unofficial action by His Majesty's Government with the object of obtaining the promotion to the rank of Consul of the French Consular Representative at Bushire.

Your Excellency will perceive that the French Minister at Tehran, who is in complete accord with the views of His Majesty's Consul-General at Bushire on the subject, and who intends to recommend them to the favourable consideration of his Government, is of opinion that the support of His Majesty's Embassy at Paris would be of assistance to him in the accomplishment of the object which he has in view.

I am of opinion that the arguments used by Major Cox in support of this proposal

are not without weight, and I have accordingly to request your Excellency to take an opportunity of intimating to the French Government, in an entirely unofficial manner, that the promotion of M. Chaloin to the rank of Consul would be agreeable to His Majesty's Government.

I am, &c.
(Signed) E. GREY.

[13453]

No. 93.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received April 20.)

(No. 107.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Teheran, April 20, 1908.

TURCO-PERSIAN frontier.

According to information in the possession of the Russian Minister, the Persian Government are discussing the advisability of sending to Constantinople a Special Mission, with the support of two Embassies, to treat direct with Turkish Government.

We think that the idea has practical advantages, and should be encouraged if Persian Government carry it further, in view of the extreme difficulty of getting the Persian case properly presented to the Sultan so long as that has to be done through intermediary of Persian Commissioner, who declines to profit by assistance of Consuls, and of Turkish Commissioner, who is untrustworthy.

A Memorandum drawn up by Motesham-es-Sultan, giving his views as to basis for negotiation, which demonstrates Commissioner's incompetency, has been communicated to me by Minister for Foreign Affairs.

[13454]

No. 94.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received April 20.)

(No. 108.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Teheran, April 20, 1908.

RUSSIAN Bank loans and security: My telegram No. 106 of the 18th instant.

I am assured by M. Hartwig that the loans for the service of which he desires to secure customs of Kermanshah are State loans on same security as those of 1900 and 1902, and not advances from Russian Bank on account current. There are three of these loans, two of 1904 and one in 1905; the latter is presumably the one mentioned by Sir A. Hardinge in his despatch No. 134, Secret, of the 14th June, 1905, and the transaction referred to in Sir A. Hardinge's No. 48 of the 17th March, 1904, may be one of the former.

If the statement of M. Hartwig is correct the Russian claim to Kermanshah is certainly good, but I will try to get details. M. Hartwig states that the Kermanshah receipts might be divided, and that he would be ready to come to some arrangement with this view.

[13707]

No. 95

India Office to Foreign Office.—(Received April 21.)

Sir,

India Office, April 16, 1908.

I AM directed to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 10th instant, on the question of leasing or securing rights of pre-emption in respect of the land on the bank of the Karun at Mohammerah available for the purposes of a railway terminus.

In reply, I am to say that it appears premature to make inquiries as to the terms on which this land could be acquired in the present state of our knowledge as to the best position for a harbour in the event of a railway project proving feasible.

The capabilities of Khor Musa for the purpose were discussed in the Government of India's Secret letter of the 24th March, 1904, forwarded with Sir A. Godley's letter of the 12th May, 1904.

Mr. Morley considers it would be best to arrive at some conclusion on the larger question before sending to Mr. Marling the instructions suggested. His Majesty's

Consul at Mohammerah might, however, be instructed to watch the proceedings of Messrs. Wöneckhaus, or other foreign agencies at Mohammerah, with a view to preventing further land being leased of the Sheikh.

I am, &c.
(Signed) COLIN G. CAMPBELL.

[13690]

No. 96.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received April 21.)

(No. 110.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Tehran, April 21, 1908.

ADVANCES of Russian Bank and Kermanshah customs. My telegrams Nos. 106 and 108 of the 18th and 20th instant.

The Russian Financial Agent has informed me that the loans in question are advances from Russian Bank, given in your despatch No. 27 (Inclosure 1) of the 6th ultimo. We have hitherto believed that these were simple advances on account current without special security, but it appears that they are secured on customs in the same manner as the 1900 and 1902 Russian Government Loans. M. de Hartwig, who believed that I was aware of this, naturally mistook for more than I intended my concurrence in proposal that Russia should encash Kermanshah customs.

According to Russian Financial Agent, only a small part of the Kermanshah receipts are required at present, and he is ready to arrange that the Imperial Bank of Persia shall receive the balance. He does not think that the Persian Government will make any difficulty.

(Repeated to St. Petersburg.)

[13270]

No. 97.

Foreign Office to India Office.

Sir,

Foreign Office, April 21, 1908.

I AM directed by Secretary Sir Edward Grey to transmit to you herewith decypher of a telegram from His Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires at Tehran relative to an application which, it is expected, will shortly be made to the Persian Government on behalf of Messrs. Haji Ali Akbar and Sons, Limited, of Manchester, for a Concession to extract red oxide on the Island of Siri in the Persian Gulf.

It appears to Sir E. Grey that any support afforded by His Majesty's Government to the demand which Haji Mirza Ali Asgar has been instructed to make at Tehran would amount to a recognition on their part by implication of the sovereignty of Persia over Siri, which, as Mr. Secretary Morley is aware, they have never been willing to admit.

Sir E. Grey is further of opinion that it would be desirable to obtain without delay from the Company interested an assurance of the nature suggested by His Majesty's Consul-General at Bushire, and I am to state that he would be glad to receive an expression of Mr. Morley's views on both these points.

I am, &c.
(Signed) LOUIS MALLET.

[13852]

No. 98.

India Office to Foreign Office.—(Received April 22.)

THE Under-Secretary of State for India presents his compliments to the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and, by direction of Mr. Secretary Morley, forwards herewith, for the information of the Secretary of State, copies of telegrams relative to the exchange of British and Russian telegraph lines in Persia.

India Office, April 22, 1908.

Inclosure 1 in No. 98.

Mr. Morley to Government of India.

India Office, April 11, 1908.

(Telegraphic.) P.

PLEASE reply as soon as possible to my telegram of the 9th April as to exchange of Persian telegraph lines. Pending a decision, negotiations at St. Petersburg are at a standstill.

Inclosure 2 in No. 98.

Government of India to Mr. Morley.

April 13, 1908.

(Telegraphic.) P.

EXCHANGE of Persian telegraphs.

We will reply as soon as possible to your telegrams dated the 9th and 11th instant. Seistan and Meshed are being consulted.

Inclosure 3 in No. 98.

Mr. Morley to Government of India.

India Office, April 14, 1908.

(Telegraphic.) P.

EXCHANGE of Persian telegraphs. Your telegram of the 13th instant.

In reply to our proposals Russian Government have accepted admission of British employes on Meshed-Tehran line, on terms enjoyed under existing arrangement by Russian employes, after line has been transferred. On Meshed-Seistan line they propose that access to line on section south of Khaf should be granted to Russian employes, and similar access on section north of Khaf to British employes. In the opinion of His Majesty's Government, argument in favour of settlement on the basis of neither Power having any signaller in zone of other is strengthened by character of Russian proposal, which is not limited to requesting a signaller at Nasratabad.

[13888]

No. 99.

India Office to Foreign Office.—(Received April 23.)

Sir,

India Office, April 22, 1908.

WITH reference to your letter dated the 31st ultimo, I am directed by Mr. Secretary Morley to inclose copy of telegraphic correspondence with the Government of India, from which it will be seen that the Indian Telegraph Department will accept the transfer of the Khaf-Nasratabad telegraph line, pending arrangements with the Indo-European Telegraph Department.

I have, &c.
(Signed) COLIN G. CAMPBELL.

Inclosure 1 in No. 99.

Mr. Morley to Government of India.

April 1, 1908.

(Telegraphic.) P.

PERSIA: Exchange of telegraph lines. Your telegram dated the 20th March. Pending arrangements with the Indo-European Telegraph Department, it would be convenient if initial transfer of Khaf-Nasratabad line were accepted and work carried on by Indian Telegraph Department through its signallers on the spot, though there is no objection to responsible control being ultimately vested in Indo-European Department, as indicated in paragraph 4 of letter to Foreign Office dated the 19th February.

This telegram should be repeated to Tehran Legation.

[1580]

Inclosure 2 in No. 99.

Government of India to Mr. Morley.

(Telegraphic) P.

April 17, 1908.

KHAFF-NASRATABAD section. Your telegram dated the 1st instant.

Pending arrangement being arrived at with Indo-European Telegraph Department, Indian Telegraph Department will accept the transfer of the line as proposed.

(Repeated to Tehran.)

[12393]

No. 100.

Foreign Office to India Office.

Sir,

Foreign Office, April 23, 1908.

WITH reference to the letter from this Office of the 20th January last, relative to the proposals of Messrs. Ellinger and Co. for the exploitation of the mines of red oxide on the Island of Hormuz, I am directed by Secretary Sir Edward Grey to transmit to you herewith copy of a letter from that firm inquiring whether they may be allowed to show to Messrs. Andrew Weir and Co. the letter addressed to them from this Office on the 18th January.*

Private and confidential inquiries made at the Board of Trade show that Messrs. Andrew Weir and Co. are a firm of shipowners of the highest character and standing, who have lately begun to interest themselves in trade with the Persian Gulf.

Sir E. Grey is therefore disposed, subject to the concurrence of Mr. Secretary Morley, to inform Messrs. Ellinger that there is no objection to their submitting the letter to the inspection of the firm in question, subject to the condition that the information so conveyed to them is treated by them as strictly confidential.

I am, &c.

(Signed) LOUIS MALLET.

[12623]

No. 101.

Foreign Office to Mr. J. R. Preece.

Sir,

Foreign Office, April 23, 1908.

WITH reference to previous correspondence relative to the provision of Indian guards for the defence of the works of the Oil Concessions Syndicate near Ahwaz, I am directed by Secretary Sir Edward Grey to transmit to you herewith, for the information of your Board, copy of a despatch from His Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires at Tehran,† showing the beneficial effect which the measure has produced on the attitude of the population towards His Majesty's Vice-Consul at Ahwaz and his companions, as well as towards the staff of the Syndicate.

I am, &c.

(Signed) LOUIS MALLET.

[12621]

No. 102.

Foreign Office to Mr. Preece.

Sir,

Foreign Office, April 23, 1908.

I AM directed by Secretary Sir Edward Grey to transmit to you herewith an extract from a despatch addressed by His Majesty's Consul at Kermanshah to His Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires at Tehran,‡ reporting on the present state of affairs at the Syndicate's works at Kasr-i-Shirin.

I am, &c.

(Signed) LOUIS MALLET.

* No. 30.

† No. 42.

‡ See Inclosure in No. 40.

[12640]

No. 103.

Foreign Office to Messrs. Ellinger.

Gentlemen,

Foreign Office, April 23, 1908.

I AM directed by Secretary Sir Edward Grey to transmit to you herewith copy of a despatch from His Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires at Tehran,* relative to a conversation which has recently taken place between himself and Haji Muin-et-Tujjar on the subject of your proposal for the formation of a Company to work his Concession for the extraction of red oxide in Hormuz Island.

It appears from this despatch that Muin-et-Tujjar has already addressed inquiries to you concerning certain points in your proposal, the meaning of which is not clear to him.

I am, &c.

(Signed) LOUIS MALLET.

[14053]

No. 104.

India Office to Foreign Office.—(Received April 21.)

Sir,

India Office, April 22, 1908.

IN reply to your letter dated the 15th instant as to the proposed exchange of the control of telegraph lines in Persia between His Majesty's and the Russian Governments, I am directed to say that Mr. Secretary Morley concurs in the view of Secretary Sir E. Grey that His Majesty's Ambassador at St. Petersburg may abstain for the present from discussing further with the Russian Government the question of the retention by each Power, after the exchange of the lines, of signallers on the line controlled by the other.

I am, &c.

(Signed) A. GODLEY.

[13690]

No. 105.

Sir Edward Grey to Mr. Marling.

(No. 85.)

(Telegraphic) P.

Foreign Office, April 24, 1908.

KERMANSHAH customs receipts.

With reference to your telegram No. 110 of the 21st instant.

The Russian Financial Agent's proposal has nothing in it to which we would object, if it meets with the approval of the bank.

If you consider that it could be managed, however, we should prefer, for the reasons set forth in your telegram No. 106 of the 18th instant, that Bushire should be substituted for Kermanshah.

[13430]

No. 106.

Sir Edward Grey to Mr. Marling.

(No. 86.)

(Telegraphic) P.

Foreign Office, April 24, 1908.

EXCHANGE of telegraphs.

I should be glad to be informed whether there are any grounds for the assumption in your telegrams Nos. 103 and 104 that we should be completely dependent on the Persians at Turbat-i-Hardari and Meshed after each Power had withdrawn their signallers from the line of telegraph under the control of the other.

Our signallers would, we presume, be replaced by Russians, and, as is the case elsewhere, British messages would be dealt with by the latter.

* No. 56.

No. 107.

[14125]

Sir F. Bertie to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received April 25.)

(No. 167.)

Paris, April 24, 1908.

Sir,
I HAD occasion to call on the Political Director at the Quai d'Orsay yesterday, and I spoke to him on the subject of the rank of the French Consular Representative at Bushire, which forms the subject of your despatch No. 171 of the 18th instant. He told me that a recommendation that M. Chaloin, the holder of the post, who is forty-six years of age, should be given the rank of Consul, had been received, and was to be considered.

I left with M. Louis an unofficial *aide-mémoire*, of which I have the honour to transmit to you a copy herewith.

I have, &c.
(Signed) FRANCIS BERTIE.

Inclosure in No. 107.

Unofficial Aide-mémoire communicated to M. Louis.

THE British Chargé d'Affaires at Tehran has reported to the Foreign Office that it is possible that the French Consular Representative at Bushire, M. Chaloin, may be raised to the rank of Consul. The Secretary of State thinks that such advancement in rank would be advantageous to British as well as French interests, for the Russian Representative at Bushire is ordinarily a Consul-General, and the German Representative, though quite a young man, has the rank of Consul, and the First Assistant to the British Consul-General is a Consul. All the present incumbents of these posts are men considerably younger than M. Chaloin, who, with his present rank, does not carry the weight which the Representative of France should do in discussions amongst members of the Consular Corps.

Paris, April 22, 1908.

No. 108.

[14160]

India Office to Foreign Office.—(Received April 25.)

THE Under-Secretary of State for India presents his compliments to the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and, by direction of Mr. Secretary Morley, forwards herewith, for the information of the Secretary of State, copy of a telegram from the Viceroy, dated the 22nd instant, relative to the Seistan branch of the Imperial Bank of Persia.

India Office, April 24, 1908.

Inclosure in No. 108.

Government of India to Mr. Morley.

(Telegraphic.) P.

April 22, 1908.

IMPERIAL Bank of Persia, Seistan branch. Your telegram of 3rd ultimo. It is in our opinion desirable on political grounds, especially as there is a branch Russian bank in Seistan, that branch should be retained for the present, even at cost of an extra 6000l. a-year. As regards letter of 31st January from Major Kennion, forwarded with Foreign Secretary's letter of the 5th ultimo, we do not know whether the bank can directly or indirectly enlarge its business in the manner suggested. Disposition of caravans from Herat for Quetta to seek for Nushki route rather than the direct route through Afghanistan is noted by Major Kennion in his diary No. 12 for week ending 21st ultimo. A further trial should be given to bank.

No. 109.

[14198]

Messrs. Ellinger and Co. to Foreign Office.—(Received April 25.)

Sir,

28, Oxford Street, Manchester, April 24, 1908.

WE are in possession of yours of yesterday's date covering copy of a despatch from His Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires at Tehran, relative to a conversation between himself and the Mouintojar on the subject of our proposal for the formation of a Company to work his Concession for the extraction of oxide on the Island of Ormuz.

The despatch sent us is of great interest to us, and we shall be obliged if you will kindly offer to Mr. Marling our best thanks for his trouble in the matter.

As regards the points raised by Mr. Marling, we shall be glad if you will inform him that it is proposed that we should take 10 per cent. in cash and shares of the 50,000l. cash realized by the sale of debentures and the 25,000l. ordinary shares only. It is not proposed that we should receive any portion of the 10,000l. 8 per cent. preference shares, for which the Mouintojar would have to pay out of the cash he receives. You can also write to Mr. Marling that after many discussions upon the subject with our solicitors and other friends, we came to the conclusion that it would not be so feasible to arrange for the debentures to be paid off progressively, instead of at the fixed date, 31st December, 1919; but this point is still having attention, as it would be much more economical and, in our opinion, more desirable, in the interests of all concerned, if it can be arranged.

We hope to have the pleasure of asking for the favour of an interview shortly with a view of putting before you the present position of this matter, and remain, &c.

(Signed) ELLINGER AND Co.

No. 110.

[14220]

Mr. G. Barclay to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received April 25.)

(No. 96.)

Constantinople, April 25, 1908.

(Telegraphic.) P.

TURCO-PERSIAN frontier.

I have only to-day received the following telegram No. 27 from His Majesty's Consul-General at Urumia dated the 16th instant:—

"Outrages by Kurds are increasing in frequency, and, owing to his being unable to check them, the Persian Commissioner is becoming unpopular. A former Russian Vice-Consul at Van, Staff Colonel Tumanski, has arrived here in the capacity of 'Secretary' of the Russian Vice-Consulate."

No. 111.

[14218]

Mr. O'Beirne to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received April 25.)

(No. 76.)

St. Petersburg, April 25, 1908.

(Telegraphic.) P.

PERSIAN telegraphs.

I have just received and am forwarding by next safe opportunity a despatch from Mr. Marling, under flying seal, in which he states that a rumour has reached German Minister in regard to proposed exchange, and that, in view of this circumstance, M. de Hartwig considers it advisable to hasten the pending negotiations.

No. 112.

[10461]

Foreign Office to India Office.

Sir,

Foreign Office, April 25, 1908.

I AM directed by Secretary Sir Edward Grey to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 25th ultimo, relative to the use of the German flag by certain native boats in the Persian Gulf, and to state that he notes that the report of His Majesty's

[1580]

X

Consul-General at Bushire, copy of which is inclosed therein, completes the information which His Majesty's Government are likely to receive on the main question at issue.

Sir E. Grey is of opinion that, if the certificates, copies of which are forwarded by Major Cox, form the only ground on which Amin-bin-Ali's claim to fly the German flag is based, the use of that flag by him is clearly irregular, and the provisions of the Brussels Act have been undoubtedly infringed.

Even if Amin-bin-Ali is a German-protected person and fulfils the numerous other conditions laid down in Articles 30 to 41 of the General Act of Brussels as indispensable in cases of the use of a foreign flag by a native boat in those waters, his claim would appear to be vitiated by the fact that these certificates were not granted to him by any recognized German authority.

In view, however, of the statement made by the Residency Agent at Lingah, that two registration certificates for these craft had been obtained by M. Wöneckhaus from the German Consulate at Bushire (see paragraph 4 of Major Cox' letter of the 22nd December last to the Government of India, copy of which was inclosed in the letter from this Office of the 28th February), it appears to Sir E. Grey to be possible, though it is doubtless most unlikely, that Amin-bin-Ali may be in possession of papers other than those of which copies were obtained by Major Cox. He is accordingly disposed, if Mr. Secretary Morley concurs, to send immediate instructions to His Majesty's Minister at Brussels to apply to the International Slavery Bureau at that capital for copies of any papers relating to these boats which may be deposited there in accordance with the provisions of Article 41, Section 3, of the General Act.

Should the result of Sir A. Hardinge's application be to disprove the existence of any valid certificates, Sir E. Grey thinks that the matter should be brought to the notice of the German Government; but should it become necessary to take this step, he would, in any case, defer it till in possession of a definite assurance that no unauthorized British flags are being flown by native craft in the Persian Gulf, since the existence of such cases would provide the German Government with the means of framing an embarrassing reply to any remonstrances which might be made to them.

He therefore awaits the promised Report of Major Cox on this subsidiary point.

I am, &c.

(Signed) LOUIS MALLET.

[14221]

No. 113.

Mr. G. Barclay to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received April 26.)

(No. 97.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Constantinople, April 26, 1908.

THE Persian Ambassador has learned from the Minister for Foreign Affairs that the Porte have ordered Tahir to return to Urumia. His Highness has also received from the Porte a Memorandum supporting Tahir's contention that parts only of the frontier are dealt with by the Treaty of 1847, so that earlier Treaties must be the basis of negotiations respecting the remainder, and maintaining that the Agreement of 1869 as to the *status quo* was merely provisional. The neutral zone is not even mentioned in the Memorandum. The Porte also suggests that the Persian Government should furnish their Commissioner with instructions in the sense of the Memorandum, but the Ambassador has forwarded it to his Government and to the Persian Commissioner without comment.

The Porte tell me that Tahir Pasha has been given instructions in accordance with the same Memorandum.

I have communicated the above to Mr. Wratislaw, who had telegraphed to ask when Tahir was returning.

[14316]

No. 114.

Mr. G. Barclay to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received April 27.)

(No. 195.)

Pera, April 20, 1908.

Sir,

WITH reference to my telegram No. 89 of the 8th instant, I have the honour to transmit translation of a *pro-memorid* which has been communicated by the Sublime Porte to the Persian Ambassador.

It will be noticed that no mention is made in this document of the neutral zone. The contention of the Turkish Commissioners that Treaties anterior to the Treaty of 1847 must serve as a basis for the negotiations, except in so far as they are expressly abrogated by that Treaty, must be interpreted with due regard to the explanatory note of 1848, and the instructions given to Colonel Williams in December 1848 (see Mr. Parker's Memorandum of December 1906, p. 7) are cited as bearing out this view. Stress is also laid on the provisional character of the *status quo* Agreement of August 1869, as shown by Articles 5 and 7.

The Grand Vizier informs me that this *pro-memorid* forms the basis of instructions which have been sent to Tahir Pasha.

I understand from the Persian Ambassador that he has not discussed this suggested basis of negotiations with the Porte, and that he has merely forwarded the *pro-memorid* to Tehran and to the Persian Commissioner.

I have, &c.

(Signed) G. BARCLAY.

Inclosure in No. 114.

Memorandum communicated by the Ottoman Government to Persian Ambassador at Constantinople.

(Translation.)

IT appears from copies of the *procès-verbaux* of the Mixed Commission recently assembled at Urmia for the settlement of the frontier dispute between the Ottoman and Persian Governments, which have been sent by his Excellency Tahir Pasha, that the deliberations of the Commission have led to no result, owing to the fact that the Ottoman Commissioners put forward the proposal that the terms of the Treaty for the delimitation of the frontier concluded at Erzeroum in 1263 and, on points not defined by that Treaty, the unabrogated terms of previous Treaties should be taken as a basis of delimitation. As no result can be obtained from the deliberations at Urmia until the Treaty texts which are to be the basis of delimitation are determined, it is necessary that a preliminary agreement on this fundamental point should be come to between the two Governments, and that similar instructions should be sent to the Commissioners on both sides.

The pretention now put forward by the Persian Commissioners at Urmia arises from their confusing the Treaty aspect of the delimitation with the temporary decisions relating to the *status quo*. As the Frontier Commissions formed on several previous occasions have been without result, owing to similar pretensions being put forward by the Persian Delegates on those occasions also, the following explanations are given with a view to avoiding the same issue in the present instance, and in order that such instructions may be given to the Persian Delegates as will expedite and insure a settlement of the business.

It is known that the Article of the Treaty of Erzeroum which deals with the frontier is the second, and that, of the points connected with the Persian frontier, this Article deals only with the ownership of the Sanjak of Zohab and the lands of Mohammerah. The Imperial Government, before ratifying the said Treaty, asked of the Persian Government explanations and assurances on certain points in it, and the desired assurances and explanations were given in writing to the Sublime Porte by Mirza Mehmed Ali Khan, who came to Constantinople as bearer of the ratifications by the Persian Government; besides which, the said envoy communicated them to the Russian and British Embassies also, and the joint note of the 9th March and the 26th February, 1848, addressed to the Sublime Porte by the then Russian and British Ambassadors, M. Titoff and Lord Cowley, contained the desired assurances and explanations in the same form. The Ottoman ratifications were drawn up on this, and the Declarations

made became an integral portion of the Treaty of 1263. It is needless to state, therefore, that the Treaty text which is to serve as the basis of delimitation must be sought in the said Treaty, together with the official notes exchanged at that time. Although there ought to be no difference of opinion on this subject, yet, as it is remembered that on the first discussion of the delimitation the Persian Delegates did not wish to accept the Declarations of Mirza Mehmed Ali Khan respecting Mohammerah, it must be known that in the view of the Ottoman Government the official Declarations made by him form an inseparable whole with the Treaty of Erzeroum.

As has been seen above, of the questions relating to the frontier, the Treaty of Erzeroum dealt only with the Mohammerah district, the mode of dividing the lands of the Sanjak of Zohab, and the retention by the Ottoman Government of the Sanjak of Suleymanié. And as it did not deal explicitly with places other than these, the remaining districts remained a subject of controversy, with the exception of the district of Khotow, the delimitation of which was subsequently effected in accordance with the principles laid down in the Treaty of Berlin. Under these circumstances it is as necessary to determine on what basis the delimitation of the districts about which there are no express provisions of Treaties is to be effected as it is that, in the places expressly dealt with in the Treaty of Erzeroum, the delimitation should be effected in accordance with the prescriptions of that Treaty. In the difference on this point existing between Tahir Pasha and Mukhteshem-es-Saltaneh, the opinion of his Excellency Mukhteshem-es-Saltaneh is not in accordance with the true state of the case. He has taken the view that the Treaty of Erzeroum settled the frontier question as a whole, so that, in places for which there was no special provision in the Treaty, it meant that the *status quo* should continue, and he has repeated in this manner the opinion expressed by the Persian Delegates on former Frontier Commissions. His view is, for the following reasons, purely mistaken:—If it be wished to rely on the *status quo* Arrangement of 1286 to support this opinion, it is clear that the line defined as the *status quo* had no Treaty character, for in the third paragraph of that Arrangement it was explicitly stated that the continuance of the *status quo* until the determination of the line of the frontier should not be considered as establishing a right of ownership, and in the seventh paragraph it was stated that "this temporary Arrangement shall remain in force pending the determination of the frontier without prejudice to the sovereignty of the two parties or to the effect of their deliberations, protests, and other pretensions concerning the lands in dispute and buildings erected."

It is unnecessary to state that to disregard inferences as against the express provisions of a Treaty, to take texts the form of which admits of no doubt or uncertainty, with their inclusive meanings, and to neglect no Treaty text are among the fundamental rules for the interpretation of Treaties. Taken in conjunction with the facts that the provision of Article II of the Treaty of Erzeroum is confined to two points of the frontier, and that in the other Articles there is no mention of the frontier, express or implied, the IXth Article, which says that "all the provisions and effects of previous Treaties and, in particular, the Treaty concluded at Erzeroum in 1238, which have not been specially altered or set aside by the present Treaty, are maintained in force as if all their Articles had been included word for word in the present instrument," establishes with a clearness that admits of no doubt the validity of the provisions of previous Treaties on points connected with the discussion of the frontier also, on which the Treaty of 1263 is silent. On this point there is no room for doubt or hesitation. Indeed, the instructions of 1848, given by the former British Ambassador, Mr. Stratford Canning, to Lieutenant-Colonel Williams, the British Delegate on the Mixed Commission, and forming the first inclosure in No. 2 in the Blue Book, printed in 1865, the validity of the unabrogated portions of older Treaties was expressly stated. For the reasons stated there is no sound method of carrying out the delimitation other than the just course of effecting it in conformity (1) with the terms of the Treaty of 1263 and the official correspondence which passed at the time of its ratification, and (2) on points where these are silent with the terms of previous Treaties subject, of course, to abrogation or modification of the older by the newer. It is necessary to the success of the issue that instructions on these lines be given to the Persian Delegates.

[14322]

No. 115.

Mr. G. Barclay to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received April 27.)(No. 201.)
Sir,*Pera, April 21, 1908.*

I HAVE the honour to transmit herewith an extract from a Confidential Memorandum which I have received from His Majesty's Consul-General at Bagdad, and which is of interest in connection with the Turco-Persian frontier dispute.

I have, &c.
(Signed) G. BARCLAY.

Inclosure in No. 115.

Memorandum communicated by Consul-General Newmarch to Mr. G. Barclay.(No. 15. Confidential.)
(Extract.)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF. Sidki Pasha has been rather despondent for some time, and it is thought that his place will be taken by Pertev Pasha. It is thought that Sidki Pasha has given his opinion that any activity on this and the more southern part of the frontier is ill-advised, because of the strength of the Shiah tribes and the number of Shiahs in the army, and that his opinion is looked upon in high places as caused by disloyalty rather than by honesty. Sidki Pasha seems a simple old man who does his best for his men.

[14241]

No. 116.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received April 27.)(No. 191.)
Sir,*St. Petersburg, April 10, 1908.*

WITH reference to my telegram No. 69 of to-day's date, I have the honour to transmit herewith copy of a letter which I have received from M. Isvolsky, stating that instructions have been sent to M. de Hartwig to approach the Persian Government with a view to coming to an arrangement in regard to the exchange of the telegraph lines in Persia. M. Isvolsky adds that he concurs in the proposal that the method of procedure should be left to the discretion of the two Representatives at Tehran.

I have, &c.
(Signed) A. NICOLSON.

Inclosure in No. 116.

M. Isvolsky to Sir A. Nicolson.

Mon cher Ambassadeur,

Saint-Petersbourg, le 27 Mars (9 Avril), 1908.

EN réponse à votre aimable lettre du 25, je m'empresse de vous faire savoir que je viens d'expédier à M. de Hartwig des instructions l'invitant à procéder aux pourparlers avec le Gouvernement de Sa Majesté le Schah en vue de mettre à exécution notre Arrangement Télégraphique du 18 (31) Août.

Je crois devoir ajouter qu'en conformité avec le désir exprimé par le Cabinet de Londres, j'ai abandonné à la discrétion de notre Envoyé de fixer, d'accord avec Mr. Marling, la procédure la plus appropriée aux circonstances actuelles pour ouvrir les négociations dont il s'agit.

Quant aux détails de cette affaire, détails dont il est question dans votre aide-mémoire du 10 Mars, je me réserve de vous en entretenir sous peu.

Votre, &c.
(Signé) ISWOLSKY.

[14243]

No. 117.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received April 27.)

(No. 193.)

Sir,

St. Petersburg, April 13, 1908.

I HAVE the honour to transmit herewith copy of an *aide-mémoire* which I have received from the Ministry for Foreign Affairs in reply to the Memorandum which this Embassy communicated on the 23rd ultimo, relative to the mode in which the transfer of the telegraph lines between Tehran and Meshed and Khaf and Nasratabad might be effected.

The Ministry for Foreign Affairs assents to the proposal, made in the above-mentioned Memorandum of the Embassy, that the British signallers should have access to the line at Tehran and Meshed, as it considers that this permission is a necessary consequence of the provisions of Article 1 of the Arrangement of the 31st August last, and it demurs to any change being made in the allocation of the signallers on the Meshed-Seistan line, as Article 2 of the same Arrangement specifies that the control of the line should be transferred on the same conditions as those actually existing. In short, the Russian Government wish to retain all their signallers at the terminus at Nasratabad and at intermediate stations, with access to the line at specified hours.

I would beg leave to submit that the interpretation given by the Russian Government to the meaning of Articles 1 and 2 of the Arrangement of the 31st August is an incorrect or, in any case, a very strained one. Throughout the negotiations concerning the Agreement as to Persia the object which was chiefly held in view was the removal of all causes of friction, and one of the principal elements of discord was precisely the question of signallers. Having that question in view, the original proposal of the British Government was that all Russian signallers should be removed from the Meshed-Seistan line and all British signallers from the Tehran-Meshed line, and this proposal was embodied in the Memorandum presented to the Russian Government in April of last year. M. Isvolsky at the time did not much like the form in which the British proposal was cast, but I do not remember during the course of the negotiations any indication being given that the signallers should remain when once the lines had been transferred. I think that the views with which both parties were animated on this point could not be better expressed than in the *aide-mémoire* communicated by M. Isvolsky on the 13th June last, a copy of which was inclosed in my despatch No. 317 of the 14th June.

In the Arrangement of the 31st August the "same conditions" undoubtedly were intended to refer to the conditions affecting maintenance and repair, and the obligations to and relations with the Persian Government. I think that there can be no doubt on that point.

It must be admitted that the desire expressed in the Embassy Memorandum of the 23rd March that British signallers should be admitted to the use of the line at certain fixed hours at Tehran and Meshed does weaken the case as presented above, and would, doubtless, lead to the maintenance, if desired, of a Russian signaller at the Nasratabad terminus. But whatever may be the ultimate wishes of His Majesty's Government on the above point, I would submit that a firm stand should be taken on the question of removing Russian signallers from the intermediate stations on the Khaf-Nasratabad section.

I have ventured to make the above few observations on the Russian *aide-mémoire*, but I trust on my approaching arrival in London that I may be permitted to discuss the whole question more fully.

I have, &c.
(Signed) A. NICOLSON.

Inclosure in No. 117.

*Memorandum communicated by the Russian Ministry for Foreign Affairs to
Sir A. Nicolson.*

AU mois de Janvier dernier le Gouvernement Impérial exprima son consentement à la proposition du Cabinet de Londres de charger les Représentants des deux États à Téhéran d'entrer en pourparlers avec le Gouvernement de Sa Majesté le

Schah au sujet de la mise à exécution des stipulations de l'Arrangement Télégraphique du 18 (31) Août, 1907. En même temps, le Cabinet de Saint-Petersbourg a cru nécessaire de faire observer qu'il serait préférable, à son avis, de traiter avec le Gouvernement Persan non seulement la question de l'échange des lignes télégraphiques de Méched-Téhéran et de Méched-Seistan, prévue par l'Arrangement précité, mais également celle de la ligne Téhéran-Khanékin. Cette dernière proposition Russe a été cependant abandonnée plus tard, vu que le Gouvernement Britannique avait témoigné de son désir de traiter la question de la ligne Téhéran-Khanékin séparément.

Les deux Gouvernements étant tombés d'accord sur les points essentiels de la procédure à adopter dans cette affaire (lettre de M. Isvolsky à Sir A. Nicolson en date du 25 Janvier, 1908), le Gouvernement Anglais proposa dans un aide-mémoire en date du 10 (23) Mars courant de régler certaines mesures de détails concernant les échanges des deux premières lignes. Ainsi qu'il est dit dans cet aide-mémoire, le Gouvernement Britannique entend que le Gouvernement Russe est prêt à se mettre à la place de l'Administration Anglaise sur la ligne Téhéran-Méched; il propose ensuite que le fil télégraphique (sur cette ligne) soit transféré au Bureau Russe à Téhéran et à Méched, et que les employés télégraphiques Anglais y aient accès à des heures fixes pour se servir de la ligne, comme cela se fait actuellement pour les employés Russes. Pour ce qui concerne le régime à établir sur la ligne Méched-Seistan, l'aide-mémoire Britannique en question propose que le Gouvernement de la Grande-Bretagne retire ses employés sur la section Khaf-Méched, et que le Gouvernement Russe rappelle les siens de la section Khaf-Nasratabad.

Les propositions Britanniques concernant le régime à établir sur la ligne Téhéran-Méched se trouve, semble-t-il, en parfaite harmonie avec les dispositions de l'Article 1^{er} de l'Arrangement du 18 (31) Août, 1907, qui stipule la cession par l'Angleterre de cette ligne aux mêmes conditions auxquelles elle se trouve actuellement dans le ressort de l'Administration Anglaise. En conséquence, le fait de l'admission des employés Anglais au travail sur cette ligne, dont il est question dans l'aide-mémoire Anglais du 10 (23) Mars, ne peut être considéré que comme une conséquence logique découlant naturellement du principe établi par l'Article 1^{er} de l'Arrangement.

Il n'en est pas de même en ce qui concerne les conditions auxquelles l'aide-mémoire Anglais propose de résoudre la question du télégraphe Méched-Seistan, car le rappel des employés Russes de la section Khaf-Nasratabad, quoique compensé par le rappel des employés Anglais de la section Russe Khaf-Méched, ne se trouve pas, semble-t-il, en conformité avec l'Article 2 du même Arrangement. En effet, ce dernier stipule la division de la ligne actuelle de Méched-Seistan en deux sections à Khaf. La section au nord de ce point ressortit de l'Administration Russe, et la section au sud du même point ressortit de l'Administration Anglaise aux mêmes conditions, en ce qui regarde les deux sections de la ligne, auxquelles le télégraphe se trouve actuellement dans le ressort de l'Administration Russe. Du moment que le sens exact de cette stipulation est celui que l'Angleterre acquiert la section Khaf-Nasratabad aux mêmes conditions auxquelles cette section se trouve actuellement dans l'Administration Russe, et que les employés Anglais sont admis actuellement au service de cette ligne, il est incontestable que le même principe doit être observé par l'Angleterre par rapport à l'admission des employés Russes lorsque cette ligne ressortira de l'Administration Anglaise. La justesse de ce principe est d'autant moins douteuse qu'il est admis par l'aide-mémoire Britannique du 10 (23) Mars par rapport à l'admission des employés Anglais à la ligne Téhéran-Méched lorsque cette dernière sera cédée à la Russie.

En conséquence, le régime le plus équitable à adopter consisterait à abandonner la section Méched-Khaf à l'Administration Russe avec admission des employés Anglais au service à des heures fixes, ainsi que cela se pratique aujourd'hui sur la ligne Méched-Seistan, et d'abandonner la section Khaf-Nasratabad à l'Administration Anglaise avec admission des employés Russes au service à des heures fixes, comme cela est projeté dans l'aide-mémoire Anglais du 10 (23) Mars par rapport à la ligne Téhéran-Méched.

Le Gouvernement Impérial aime à espérer, par suite, que le Cabinet de Londres voudra bien reconnaître la justesse des raisonnements exposés ci-dessus et se déclare prêt, le cas échéant, de munir le Ministre de Russie à Téhéran d'instructions en ce sens.

Saint-Petersbourg, le 30 Mars (12 Avril), 1908.

[14244]

No. 118.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received April 27.)

(No. 196.)

Sir,

St. Petersburg, April 17, 1908.

WITH reference to my telegram No. 72 of yesterday's date, I have the honour to transmit herewith copy of an *aide-mémoire* which I have received from the Imperial Ministry for Foreign Affairs requesting to be informed of the views of His Majesty's Government in regard to the sequestration of the customs revenues of Kermanshah by the Imperial Bank of Persia.

I have, &c.
(Signed) A. NICOLSON.

Inclosure in No. 118.

*Memorandum communicated by the Russian Ministry for Foreign Affairs to
Sir A. Nicolson.*

LE Ministre de Russie à Téhéran télégraphie que la Banque Impériale de Perse a séquestré les revenus de la douane de Kermanschah, dans le but de garantir les paiements dus à elle par le Gouvernement Persan.

Ainsi que cela est stipulé par les contrats des emprunts qui ont été conclus en Russie par le Gouvernement de Sa Majesté le Schah, les revenus douaniers en question rentrent dans la catégorie de ceux qui servent de garantie à ces emprunts. Par suite, le séquestre de ces revenus lèse les droits acquis à la Banque d'Escompte et de Prêts de Perse. Il est à noter en outre que, Kermanschah se trouvant dans la zone mentionnée à l'Article I de la Convention du 18 (31) Août, 1907, les revenus des douanes de Kermanschah ne sauraient être affectés, conformément aux stipulations de la dite Convention, à la garantie d'emprunts autres que ceux conclus en Russie. Le fait qu'une des deux Parties Contractantes ne se conformerait pas strictement aux dispositions de la Convention serait d'autant plus regrettable, que cela formerait un précédent sur lequel des Puissances tierces pourraient se baser pour se faire hypothéquer, sous une forme ou une autre, les revenus douaniers Persans qui sont censés être affectés exclusivement au service des emprunts conclus en Russie et en Angleterre.

De plus, du moment où les revenus de la douane de Kermanschah servent de garantie aux paiements à la Banque Impériale de Perse, il en résulte qu'une partie des revenus des douanes du Golfe Persique devient libre, à la suite de quoi le Gouvernement Persan peut en profiter pour garantir à l'aide de ces sommes une transaction financière quelconque, au détriment tant de la Grande-Bretagne que de la Russie. M. de Hartwig a eu l'occasion d'attirer l'attention de Mr. Marling sur le côté dangereux d'une pareille combinaison et lui a exprimé l'avis qu'il serait équitable, dans ces conditions, que la Banque Impériale de Perse séquestre les revenus des douanes du Golfe et remette les sommes provenant de Kermanschah à la Banque d'Escompte et de Prêts de Perse. Mr. Marling a déclaré à son collègue de Russie qu'il partage pleinement son avis.

De son côté, le Ministère Impérial considère que la justesse de l'opinion émise par le Ministre de Russie est hors de doute, et il serait fort reconnaissant à l'Ambassade de la Grande-Bretagne si elle voulait lui faire connaître l'avis du Cabinet de Londres à ce sujet.

Saint-Petersbourg, le 2 (15) Avril, 1908.

[14493]

No. 119.

Mr. G. Barclay to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received April 27.)

(No. 98.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Constantinople, April 27, 1908.

TURCO-PERSIAN frontier.

I have to-day telegraphed to Mr. Wratislaw informing him that the Grand Vizier tells me that Tahir Pasha had started from Arjish on his way to Urumia.

[14487]

No. 120.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received April 27.)

(No. 111.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Tehran, April 27, 1908.

EXCHANGE of telegraph lines. Your telegram No. 86 of the 24th instant.

It was naturally assumed by His Majesty's Consuls at Meshed and Seistan that *status quo* of Meshed-Khaf section is maintained, as it is not mentioned in Agreement of the 31st August, 1907. This was my belief also, till I received Sir A. Nicolson's telegram No. 71.

Unless an arrangement is made for Russians to forward our messages, we shall be dependent on Persians if our signallers are withdrawn on this section.

I venture, in view of opinions expressed by Consuls, to revert to suggestion made in my telegram No. 91, *status quo* being maintained on section between Meshed and Khaf.

[13707]

No. 121.

Sir Edward Grey to Mr. Marling.

(No. 88.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Foreign Office, April 27, 1908.

LAND at Mohammerah (see your telegram No. 92 of the 9th instant).

In order to prevent the Sheikh from leasing further land, you should send instructions to His Majesty's Consul to watch the proceedings of foreign agencies, especially Messrs. Wöneckhaus.

[12622]

No. 122.

Sir Edward Grey to Mr. O'Beirne.

(No. 117. Confidential.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, April 27, 1908.

I TRANSMIT to your Excellency herewith copy of a despatch from His Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires at Tehran, relative to the alleged grant by the Persian Government to Germany of a Concession for the construction of a railway from Tehran to Kermanschah.

I have to request your Excellency to inquire confidentially of the Russian Government whether they have any knowledge of this report, the truth of which is denied by the Persian Minister for Foreign Affairs.

I am, &c.
(Signed) E. GREY.

[14487]

No. 123.

Sir Edward Grey to Mr. Marling.

(No. 89.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Foreign Office, April 28, 1908.

I HAVE received your telegram No. 111 of the 27th instant respecting telegraph lines.

Is it a fact that the Regulations or practice actually in force prohibit Russian signallers from transmitting British messages, even should there be no British signaller, and further that, in order to modify this, a special arrangement would be necessary?

This is the inference which I have drawn from above-mentioned telegram.

[14693]

No. 124.

India Office to Foreign Office.—(Received April 29.)

THE Under-Secretary of State for India presents his compliments to the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and, by direction of Mr. Secretary Morley, forwards herewith, for the information of the Secretary of State, copy of a telegram from the Viceroy, dated the 28th instant, relative to the exchange of British and Russian telegraphs in Persia.

India Office, April 29, 1908.

Inclosure in No. 124.

Government of India to Mr. Morley.

(Telegraphic.) P.

April 28, 1908.

EXCHANGE of Persian telegraphs (see your telegram dated the 14th instant and previous correspondence). Consul at Seistan telegraphs as follows:—

[See Mr. Marling's telegram No. 103 of the 18th April.]

Consul-General at Meshed telegraphs as follows:—

[See Mr. Marling's telegram No. 104 of the 18th April.]

Both telegrams were repeated to His Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires at Tehran, in consultation with whom practical objections urged by our local officers, which have considerable force, will perhaps be considered. We concur, however, subject to Mr. Marling's opinion, in the view that on general grounds it is desirable that a settlement on basis of signallers of either Power being excluded from zone of the other should be arrived at.

[9460]

No. 125.

Sir Edward Grey to Mr. Marling.

(No. 90.)

Foreign Office, April 29, 1908.

(Telegraphic.) P.

RETENTION of two Military Attachés in Persia. With reference to Government of India's despatch No. 115 of the 7th November, 1907:

I should like to receive your views with regard to abolition of post at Tehran. The greatest importance is attached by the Government of India to retention of that at Meshed.

The retention of both posts would be difficult to justify.

[14795]

No. 126.

Mr. G. Barclay to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received April 30.)

(No. 99.)

Constantinople, April 30, 1908.

(Telegraphic.) P.

I SAW the Minister for Foreign Affairs this afternoon, and spoke to him on the subject of the Kurdish raid into Persian territory reported by Mr. Marling in his telegram No. 12 of to-day. His Excellency informed me that he had no knowledge of the occurrence.

As the result of strong representations the Grand Vizier promised Prince Mirza Ali Riza Khan this afternoon that he would send telegraphic instructions to the civil and military authorities at Van and Mosul to take whatever measures lay in their power for preventing Persia being invaded by Kurds.

[14778]

No. 127.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received April 30.)

(No. 112.)

Tehran, April 30, 1908.

(Telegraphic.) P.

TURCO-PERSIAN frontier.

Persian Commissioner has telegraphed to the Persian Government that the Kurds have raided the country right up to Urumia, and that about 2,000 people have been killed. A higher figure is given in another account, but both are gross exaggerations probably. Six hundred men have been ordered from Miandoab to Urumia, and situation is considered to be very serious.

The telegraph line to Tabreez is cut, and I have therefore no news from Consul-General. The Persian message was sent for transmission to Khoi.

It is certain, according to the Minister for Foreign Affairs, that the Turks instigated the raid.

[14898]

No. 128.

India Office to Foreign Office.—(Received May 1.)

India Office, April 30, 1908.

Sir,

I AM directed to acknowledge the receipt of your letter, dated the 21st instant, as to an application which, it is expected, will shortly be made to the Persian Government on behalf of Messrs. Haji Ali Akbar and Sons (Limited), of Manchester, for a Concession to extract red oxide on the Island of Sirri, in the Persian Gulf.

In reply, I am to say that Mr. Secretary Morley concurs in the views expressed by the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs as to the inappropriateness of supporting the application at Tehran. At the same time, the question arises whether silence on our part at this stage will not be tantamount to standing by, and thus admitting the Persian claim. I am to recall attention to Sir Arthur Hardinge's note to the Persian Government of the 15th June, 1904, in which he referred to the necessity for a reciprocal settlement of the controversy as to jurisdiction between the two Governments. The present occasion might be taken to revive the intimation then made. If, however, the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs would desire to hear the views of the Government of India upon the matter before he arrives at any conclusion, a reference will be made to the Viceroy by telegraph.

I am, &c.
(Signed) A. GODLEY.

[14937]

No. 129.

Mr. G. Barclay to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received May 1.)

(No. 100.)

Constantinople, May 1, 1908.

(Telegraphic.) P.

TURCO-PERSIAN frontier.

Following is a repetition of Mr. Wratislaw's telegram No. 28 dated the 27th ultimo received to-day:—

I learn from Turkish sources that Tahir Pasha is on his way back to Urumia. With regard to the resumption of negotiations, the Persian Commissioner assures me that he has no instructions whatever.

This neighbourhood is suffering from a worse state of public order than ever. For the last twelve days communication by telegraph has been interrupted as the line has been destroyed by Kurds. This telegram is being sent to Tabreez by messenger.

[14936]

No. 130.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received May 1.)

(No. 114.)

Tehran, May 1, 1908.

(Telegraphic.) P.

TURCO-PERSIAN frontier. My telegram No. 112 of the 30th ultimo.

Russian Consul at Urumia has telegraphed to the Russian Minister confirming report of Kurdish raid. There can be no doubt of the gravity of the affair, but the original reports were probably much exaggerated.

[13453]

No. 131.

Sir Edward Grey to Mr. Marling.

(No. 91.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Foreign Office, May 1, 1908.

FRONTIER dispute.

I have been informed by Count Benckendorff that if the Persian Government carry out their intention of sending the Mission referred to in your telegram No. 107, the Russian Government would give it their support at Constantinople. To this I have replied that, assuming that a reasonable basis is taken for negotiations, His Majesty's Government will also give their support.

Please inform M. de Hartwig of above.

[14866]

No. 132.

Sir Edward Grey to Mr. Marling.

(No. 92.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Foreign Office, May 1, 1908.

PROTECTION of Bahreinese.

With reference to your telegrams Nos. 95 and 96.

Our right would appear to be sufficiently recognized by the rendering of justice and reparation to the man who was injured.

The occupation of an island, or the threat of such a proceeding, seems unnecessary, unless the Persian Government reiterate their claim to the ownership of Bahrein in their amended note.

[15106]

No. 133.

India Office to Foreign Office.—(Received May 2.)

Sir,

India Office, May 1, 1908.

IN reply to your letter dated the 23rd April last, I am directed to say that Mr. Secretary Morley concurs in the proposal of the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs to inform Messrs. Ellinger and Co. that there is no objection to their submitting for the inspection of Messrs. Andrew Weir and Co., on the condition mentioned, the letter addressed to them from the Foreign Office on the 18th January last as to their proposals for the exploitation of the mines of red oxide on the Island of Hormuz.

I am, &c.

(Signed) A. GODLEY.

[15127]

No. 134.

Mr. G. Barclay to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received May 3.)

(No. 103.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Constantinople, May 3, 1908.

FOLLOWING from Mr. Wratislaw, Urumia, No. 29, dated yesterday and received to-day:

"The inhabitants of a number of Persian villages are taking refuge in Urumia; others have submitted to the Turks, and several more are thinking of following their example. The Kurds from Ushnu and Mergavar are mainly responsible for the outrages in the south, and the Turks cannot disclaim responsibility for their action.

"There is no news of Tahir Pasha.

"Telegraphic communication has been restored, but I fear only temporarily."

[15128]

No. 135.

Mr. G. Barclay to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received May 3.)

(No. 104.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Constantinople, May 3, 1908.

WITH regard to the Kurdish outrages reported by Mr. Wratislaw in his telegram No. 29 of yesterday, I am informed by the Porte that the Turkish frontier officials have received the strictest instructions to prevent the Kurds under their immediate authority from committing depredations.

[15161]

No. 136.

Mr. G. Barclay to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received May 4.)

(No. 210.)

Sir,

Constantinople, April 28, 1908.

I HAVE the honour to forward herewith a despatch from His Majesty's Vice-Consul at Van, inclosing three road sketches,* one road report, and a military report on the district recently passed through by him on the Turco-Persian frontier.

I have, &c.

(Signed) G. BARCLAY.

Inclosure 1 in No. 136.

Vice-Consul Dickson to Sir N. O'Connor.

(No. 7.)

Sir,

Van, March 15, 1908.

I HAVE the honour to inclose three road sketches,* one road report, and a military report on the district passed through during my recent journey, which I beg that your Excellency will transmit to the military authorities.

I have, &c.

(Signed) BERTRAM DICKSON,
Captain, R.F.A.

Inclosure 2 in No. 136.

*Reports by Vice-Consul Dickson.**Military Report.*

I CANNOT presume what the Russian plan of campaign would be in case she should side with Persia in a war with Turkey, but history shows that her usual plan has been to invade the Laz coast and Erzeroum, while leaving a defensive force to guard the flank from Bayezid to Julfa. If she were again to follow this plan (this is merely a supposition), and the Turks found that, after leaving a strong defensive force round Erzeroum and the Laz coast, they could send a large force, say, of the IVth or Vth Army Corps, to Bayezid and Khoi, while the VIth Army Corps could advance by Lahijan to Urumia, the occupation of Azerbaijan and a threatened advance on Caucasia would be a serious menace to Russia.

I mention this possibility with a view to showing what part some of the districts in the attached sketches* would play in such an eventuality.

In Azerbaijan the objectives of the Turks would probably be Urumia, Khoi, Marand, and Tabreez. I believe that, under present conditions, they would have little difficulty in occupying any of these places, if not opposed by Russia. The troops under Mahmoud Fayzil Pasha, now at Suj-Bulak, could occupy the Urumia district, and the troops of the IVth Army Corps at Serai could occupy Khoi at any moment.

Lake Urumia would, in many ways, form an obstacle to the Turks' plans should they decide to employ the Maraga-Tabreez-Marand road for the advance of the VIth Army Corps, as it would separate them from the IVth Army Corps at Khoi and Salmas, but it also has its advantages in giving two separate lines of advance and retirement.

One may say that the Van Vilayet is at the present moment devoid of provisions for warlike purposes. The country has been bled and ruined to such an extent within the last few years that it is now in a state of bankruptcy. The price of corn is ten times what it was seven years ago, and everything else is in proportion; this is due to scarcity, and not to the cheapness, of money. Thus, I fail to see how any large body

* Not reproduced.

of troops can be provisioned from the Van Vilayet, and the roads and transport arrangements are not favourable for provisioning an army from other vilayets farther west or south. Therefore, any large body of troops east of Van must look for some other district for their provisions.

This district seems indicated in the Urumia and Salmas Plains and the rich country adjoining. I have not been able to obtain accurate statistics of the production of these districts, but it must be far greater than the Van Vilayet, while, with the Turks holding the Lahijan-Vezney road, they could supplement their supplies from Mesopotamia as required. Thus, the Turks could form a base at a point where the road from Bagdad meets the roads from Van and the west via Bashkala and Serai. At Urumia far better facilities would be found to form a base than anywhere in Turkish territory. A large bazaar, many craftsmen, tailors, shoemakers, blacksmiths, &c., and, although in a hostile country, I think the hostility would be a negligible quantity. A base at Urumia would be easily defended if necessary.

For defence from the north I believe there is an excellent position along the water-shed between the Kotur Chai and Lake Urumia, south of Khoi (I have only seen it from the west end of the position).

There is another strong position south of the Salmas Plain, along the Aghvan Dag and Karabagh Dag to the lake. Farther south there is still another even stronger along the Sheikh Basit and Argi Dags to the lake.

To the east of Urumia there is the lake, and there are no boats of any importance on it.

From the south I understand that Urumia could be defended by a strong position from Ushnu and the Ali Kerim Dag to the lake, but as this would cut off communication with the Bagdad road a position between Suj-Bulak and the lake would be preferable, but I do not know the country in that region.

This occupation of the Urumia-Salmas district would be highly desirable from the Turkish point of view. With a little trouble the Bashkala-Diza-Bajirka road and the Kotur-Serai roads could be made practicable for wheels; this would give three cart roads from Van, viz., by Kotur, Deir, and Bajirka for use by the IVth and Vth Army Corps if required.

With the present state of politics in Persia the Persian Kurds would, I believe, give the Turks no trouble, and, in fact, might even help them by being sent to pillage the Persian villages round Tabreez and east of the lake. These Kurds at present are on the side of the Shah against the Enjumans, and the Turks, in their intrigues with the Kurds, pretend that they are on the Shah's side also, and that their incursions into Persian territory are on behalf of the Shah. This excuse seems to satisfy the Kurds' scant ideas of Persian patriotism, if any were needed. They would be delighted to go and scour the Tabreez country, and might act as a very irregular cavalry screen on the east of the Turks.

I might mention here that the Armenian revolutionaries in Van and Salmas have been informed by their Committee in Tiflis that in the event of war they will side with the Russians against Turkey. Unaided by the Russians they could mobilize about 3,500 armed sharpshooters to harass the Turks about the frontier and on their lines of communication.

In the case of a war between Turkey and Persia only I believe the Turks would have to make their objective Azerbaijan and Tabreez so as to have their force near the Russian frontier in the case of Russian intervention.

The Turks at the present have a division at Suj-Bulak; these, with the two battalions at Mergavver and Tergavver, could at once occupy Urumia and the Sheikh Basit-Argi Dag position, while the Serai troops could occupy Khoi and wait until reinforced to carry out the rest of the scheme, in the meantime collecting stores, forming a base in Urumia, and repairing the roads. If forced to evacuate Khoi and to retire on Van, they could take up positions on the hills east of Khoi, where the Kotur Chai enters the Khoi Plain. The valley between this position and Zeri is a deep, mountainous, craggy gorge, and could easily be held by a small force; between Zeri and Kevlik the hills are thrown back, and the valley is more open, and every few miles one comes across ideal defensive positions; the two best are probably at Habashi and 1 mile west of Kotur.

The line of hills west of the Urumia Plain could be utilized in a retirement to the west from Urumia, but, owing to the open country behind and the numerous passes through these hills, they would be liable to be turned. The main position would be across the Baradost Chai, by Bajirka and Kotul Dag, guarding the road to Gavvar.

Owing to the unusually bad weather experienced on my journey it was quite impossible to follow some of the routes I would have liked to have taken, so as to have made a more comprehensive sketch, as the roads were already snow-blocked for the winter. The same reason—incessant blizzards of snow and rain, which continued throughout my journey—prevented my taking observations of sun or stars for my position. The attached sketches are therefore only road traverses with compass and watch.*

I found the existing intelligence map of the country round the Persian frontier very inaccurate and confusing, especially in the districts of Baradost, Mergavver, and Tergavver, many villages being marked which do not exist, and others, as Naychellan and Mastaka, being marked in twice over.

The road between Bashkala and Gavvar is marked as passable for wheels in the Military Report, "Turkey in Asia," vol. ii. This is not strictly the case. South of Chardaran, crossing the Messel Chai, is some 2 miles of very steep, rocky track, and farther south, descending from the high hills to the Nihail Chai, before one enters the Gavvar Plain, is some 2 or 3 miles of bad, narrow, rocky track; all of this is quite impracticable for wheels, and would require considerable blasting and constructing before being made so.

The road from Urumia to Serai via Salmas and Kotur was formerly practicable for wheels all through, but, owing to frontier troubles, the section between Khoi and Kotur has not been used for the last three years, and, being in a deep, rocky gorge, has been entirely washed away. At present it is impassable for wheels, and with difficulty for horses; there are two places where packs require to be unloaded and carried by hand.

(Signed) BERTRAM DICKSON,
Captain, R.F.A.

Van.

Route Report: Urumia, Salmas, Kotur, Serai, Karasu, Van.

Place.	Miles.	Miles.	Description.
Urumia	Leave Urumia by Tabreez gate: broad unmetalled track with ditches and trees each side across a flat fertile plain covered with flourishing villages, gardens, and vineyards, and intersected by irrigation canals, many of them large, and formidable obstacles for cavalry or artillery, which would be obliged to keep to the tracks, of which there are many from village to village in and about the fields. Many of the vineyards, villas, gardens, &c., are surrounded by high mud-walls, and most of the villages and caravanserais are also walled. Low undulating hills 5 or 6 miles west; Lake Urmia some 12 miles east. Urumia Plain is very fertile and rich, and large stores of grain and rice could be obtained, and sheep from the neighbouring hills. Wood is not very abundant. There is a telegraph from Urumia to Diliman and Tabreez, and telephone in the town and to some of the neighbouring villages, belonging to the Persian notabilities.
Charbash, Hatungan	$\frac{1}{2}$	Charbash, a large suburb on left; gardens and villas and vineyards left and right. Hatungan 1 mile left.
Diza	Diza on right.
Carressaloo	Carressaloo $\frac{1}{2}$ mile left.
Boadikeni	Boadikeni 1 mile left.
Kanjiwat	2	Kanjiwat $\frac{1}{2}$ mile right.
Janala	Janala $\frac{1}{2}$ mile right.
Kizil Sheik	$1\frac{1}{2}$	Kizil Sheik, large village each side of road, cross large canal by culvert (stone), 10 feet.
Jerdilabal	Jerdilabal, large village.
Rosa Chai	$1\frac{3}{4}$	Cross Rosa Chai Ford; wide dry stream, water all used for irrigation.
Sungarali	Sungarali $\frac{1}{2}$ mile right on river bank; walled vineyards all round, villas in vineyards.
Bozli	Bozli $\frac{1}{2}$ mile right, small hill 3 miles left.
Askerabad	Askerabad $\frac{1}{2}$ mile left. Cross two large canals, stone culverts; vineyards (walled) on left, open cultivated fields right.
Caravanserai	Caravanserai, or rest-house; gardens and villas right. Plain descends a few feet to basin of Nazlu Chai.

* Not reproduced.

Place.	Miles.	Miles.	Description.
Araffi, Dasdegirt	Cross canal, stone culvert. Two villages of Araffi on left. Desdegirt right. Cross large canal bridge (stone), one arch 12 feet.
Urali	Urali, large Kurd village.
Alikan	Alikan 1 1/2 miles right.
Chungarali, Nazlu Chai..	5 1/2	11	Chungarali 1/4 mile right on banks of Nazlu Chai, 80 feet wide; fordable except in spring, gravel bottom, 4-arch brick bridge. Several villages along its banks west to where it emerges into plain through a deep narrow rocky gorge some 12 miles west. Some five curiously shaped rocky peaks on the right like buttresses on the edge of the plain. Beyond these peaks, and inclosed by them, is a high, grassy plateau sloping to Sheikh Basil Dag; this is part of Somai, and is inhabited by the Kardar Shekaks, much dreaded by the Persians in the plain. This Somai extends right up to the Kilusa D., south of Salmas.
Somai	Somai 1 mile left. Cross two canals.
Sanakhli	Saatlu, large Kurd village. Open cultivated fields all round.
Saatlu	Three villages close together, about 2 1/2 miles right, called Aulabaili.
Aulabaili	Askerabad 3 miles left.
Askerabad	High plateau of rounded grassy hills, called Argi D., on left, with here and there rocky krantzes.
Argi D.	Shumanabat 1 mile right.
Shumanabat	..	4 1/2	Dry stream and Khanaya 2 miles left in small valley.
Khanaya	Karnemabat 1/2 mile right; large walled caravanserai on road; cliffs of Argi D. descend to road on left. Road now passes along between cliffs of Argi D. on left, and marshy swamp on right to lake shore, which here approaches road.
Karnemabat, caravanserai	..	2 1/2	Girgadan 5 miles right on lake shore.
Girgadan	Small fort or guard-house. Tezekent 1/2 mile left, lake shore 1/2 mile right. Small peninsula of hills descends to road from Argi D. Lake 1/4 mile right.
Tezekent	..	3	Imamkendi 2 miles left under cliffs of Argi D. Guard-house.
Imamkendi	An open valley from west-north-west, good cultivation. Kiaris and Hammamlar 3 miles left up this valley, with large gardens, below a small conical hill in valley.
Kiaris, Hammamlar	Jebelkendi 1/4 mile right. Cross dry river bed.
Jebelkendi	..	3	Guard-house on right. Cross a flat plain cultivated.
Kalungi	..	2 1/2	Kalungi, large Kurd village with large gardens and vineyards. Cross a stream from left; road passes through vineyards below east slope of a curious long razor-backed rock. Cross stream from left.
Gavelan	..	1 1/2	Gavelan, large rich Assyrian village, orchards, vineyards, &c.
Jemelabad	Jemelabad, large Kurd village, rich orchards, &c. From Gavelan a shorter track by Alikan goes round slopes of Aghvan D. to Salmas some three hours shorter, but track is bad and rough, and country passed through is inhabited by Shekaks, with a bad character. A chain of hills runs west to east here, Aghvan D. being a conspicuous peak. Several small streams from this chain.
Gootehi	..	3 1/2	Gootehi, a large Kurd village with straggling farms and orchards, and a large caravanserai. From here road turns left up a watercourse, which it follows up to over a low saddle in the Geduch D. range, road passable for wheels, but rather rough in places, as being light soil is frequently washed away by rains.
Baru	Baru 2 1/2 miles right under Geduch D. Lake shore here turns east, and is about 2 miles right.
Guard-house, Goduch	..	5	Top of pass and guard-house easy slope descends, slightly zigzagging, to a small open valley, with dry river bed from Aghvan D. 6 miles south-west. There is a guard-house on river bank, and a steep craggy hill on far side of valley.
Gedik	Issisi, a large Kurd village 4 miles left up this valley.
Guard-house	..	3 1/2	Moughoul, Kurd village, 1/2 mile left in a small valley surrounded by rocky crags. On right are undulating slopes, rising gradually to Geduch D.
Issisi	Guard-house. Valley opens out to Salmas Plain.
Moughoul	Aghziera, a walled village 4 miles right on shore of lake which here bends west, having rounded a promontory formed by the mass of Geduch D. Road turns left along foot of rocky crag.
Guard-house	..	2	Enali, a sheep farm or village, 1 mile right, in flat grassy plain.
Aghziera	Khantaki 1/4 mile right, under rocky outcrop in plain.
Enali	Meenas, 1/4 mile right on a stream between two rock outcrops.
Khantaki	Road turns left round north end of crag on left. Cross small sluggish stream from left coming down a valley from Aghvan D.
Meenas	..	3	Timar (K.) 1 1/2 miles left up this valley under a crag.
Timar	Alabat, new walled village, 1/2 mile left. Two crags on left, one large one right, with Sassanian bas-reliefs.
Alabat	..	1 1/2	

Place.	Miles.	Miles.	Description.
Salmas Plain	Road is now in the actual Salmas Plain, a flat-marshy plain some 8 or 10 miles wide to 30 miles long, well watered by sluggish streams from surrounding hills, and where drained and irrigated very fertile. Numerous large rich prosperous villages dotted about, vineyards and orchards and trees planted along canals. Salmas is the name of a district. Road across marshy plain crosses several small sluggish streams from left, which flow to main Zola Chai 3 miles right. Several villages along banks of Zola Chai.
Dirishki	..	3 1/2	Dirishki, large straggling village, some 400 houses. Road through walled gardens and across fields and cultivation. Many irrigation channels.
Haftowan	..	3 1/2	Haftowan, large straggling village. Villages here adjoin one another.
Khosrava	..	1	Khosrava, large rich Assyrian village. Establishment of French Lazarist Fathers and French "Sœurs."
Kuhna Shehr, Dilliman, T.O.	Kuhna Shehr-i-Salmas, the ancient city, is some 3 miles west-south-west of Khosrava, and is a dirty, walled town, mostly ruined, and a centre for cattle and sheep trade. Dilliman, the capital of the district, also a dirty, walled (ruined mud) city, and seat of Governor under Urumia, is 3 1/2 miles north-east. Has a large bazaar. Large stores of food should be obtainable at Salmas, as it is a rich agricultural district. Road from Khosrava across cultivated fields. Cross large canal by a mill.
Arouan	Arouan 1/4 mile right; large village.
Saoura	Saoura, a large straggling village 1 mile left. Cross a stream from left.
Ayan	..	3 1/2	Cross a stream from left. Ayan 1 mile on left, where plain ends and undulating slopes rise to north-west. Cross stream from left.
Sheyidan	Sheyidan 1 1/2 miles left; edge of hills.
Mouvanjuk	..	2	Cross larger stream from north. Mouvanjuk, large Kurd village.
Berkeshli, Saramergi, Vardan	..	2 1/2	Berkeshli 3 miles right, under small hillock. Road now follows up small flat valley, a branch of Salmas Plain. Saramergi, large Armenian village. Vardan 1 mile left, in a valley from left, hills on left slope up to large massifs of Choban D. and Surava D.
Chichek	Chichek 2 1/2 miles right, under small hillock.
Ikawa	Ikawa 1 1/2 miles right, under small hillock.
Reshgiron, Gengeji	Reshgiron 2 miles. Gengeji 4 1/2 miles, up a valley on left. Cross small stream from right.
Hodar, Eske Hodar	..	3 1/2	Cross main stream in valley. Deep valley from left. Hodar 1/4 mile up this valley. Eske Hodar 1 mile up this valley; a ruined village with an interesting rock citadel and caverns on a big crag.
Gumleet	Gumleet 4 1/2 miles left, up same valley.
Selar	Selar 1 1/2 miles right, on edge of small hill. Valley closes in. Cross a large branch of stream which comes down from a deep valley or rocky gorge from west.
Shorik	Shorik 1 mile right, under small hill. Ascend a spur.
Urban	..	4	Urban, small Begziade Kurd village. There is a mule track over the hills from Urban to Zeri which saves some four hours, but it is closed in winter. Cross a stream and small valley from north. Follow up a small valley over an undulating grassy saddle. Descend into a valley from west winding along the slope.
Keupilan	..	4 1/2	Keupilan, small Kurd village. Cross dry river bed, follow down valley. Valley opens out to a small flat basin.
Zeira	Zeira, small village, 1/2 mile right.
Sheiraki	Sheiraki, 3 miles up a small valley to right. Stream follows on north-east into Khoi Plain, road turns north.
Yezdikan	..	3 1/2	Yezdikan, large Kurd village by some springs. Road turns north-west, crosses a small saddle into a small valley where two streams meet from west. Follow north-west up a small ravine over a steep spur from Kurji D. on left. Road zigzags.
Top saddle	..	5	Top of spur. Descend steep slope; winding track over broken slag into valley of Kotur Chai, here a swift stream, 20 yards wide and 3 feet deep, ford river close to a mill. Track here joins the main road Khoi to Van via Kotur. Kotur Chai valley very rough deep gorge. The road was formally made practicable for wheels, but within last three years owing to frontier troubles has been unused, and is now quite destroyed by various storms, and in several places is impassable even for mules, which have to be man-handled round boulders and ledges of rock. It would require a lot of repairing to be made practicable. (I had mules fall into the river from the road on three occasions.)
Kotur Chai Ford	..	1 1/2	Stream and valley join from right. Up this valley are Almali, 7 miles, Hindovan, 9 miles, both Kurd.
Almali Hindovan	

Place.	Miles.	Miles.	Description.
Khailalich .. ..	..	..	Khailalich, ruined village $\frac{1}{4}$ mile right. Two corries on left. Broken rocky hills each side, road bad; small valley on left. Estoran 1 mile left, high up on hill top. Enter small gorge, road round rocky ledge.
Khan .. ..	..	..	Small open flat with patch of cultivation, and a ruined Khan beside some sulphur springs. Corrie on left.
Karageul Su .. ..	..	3 $\frac{1}{2}$ 98	Small stream in gorge, Karageul Su joins from west-south-west. Small wooden foot-bridge over river. Corries right and left. Road better, but steep rocky slopes each side of river. Round a spur of purple and yellow rock. Small corrie left. Few cypress trees on slopes, and sulphur deposits here and there. Through a narrow gorge with rapids. Road very bad, mules have to be unloaded and man-handled. Precipices on right, and high crags on left. Corrie on right. Road in river bed round a boulder (bad, impassable, if much water). Corries left and right. Ruined bridge. Another bad ledge; mules have to be unloaded and man-handled some 150 yards. High crags both sides, ruined castle on right.
Khan (ruined)	4	97	Ruined Khan, on small open flat. Valley opens, hills less rocky and lower (or rather the river and road have ascended higher). Broken gorges to right and left. Through small rocky gorge, then opens out. Another small gorge and rapids. Opens out. Small valley from right. Hills appear rounder, lower, grassy.
Kukurt	4	101	Open basin, valley from right. Kukurt $\frac{1}{2}$ mile right, with cultivation. Small valley from left. Small valley right and left. Small valley right.
Zeri	3	104	Open valley or basin left. Zeri $\frac{1}{2}$ mile left in this basin. Small valley right. Valley now more open, and track good, though here and there one is obliged to cross the river, which is easily fordable, being here in a wide shallow bed, with gravel bottom. Grassy undulating hills each side, with patches of cultivation here and there in suitable places. Patches of brushwood in river bed. Small valleys frequently join from left and right.
Mahine	3	107	Mahine, twenty Kurd huts on left, some marshy flats. Cross river, valley from left. Open flat cultivation.
Habashi, Ashagi, Kelt ..	1 $\frac{1}{2}$	108 $\frac{1}{2}$	Habashi Ashagi, twenty Kurd huts, valley from right. Kelt 4 miles up this valley.
Habashi Yokari .. ..	..	..	Valley from north-north-west. Habashi Yokari $\frac{1}{4}$ mile right in this valley. River turns left through a short narrow gorge; road frequently crosses river. Valley opens out again, hills on each side gently undulating.
Kotur	4 $\frac{1}{2}$	113	Kotur, small Kurd village with ruins of a mud fort, seat of a Persian Kaimakam. Open flat country, cultivated.
Giwara, Tirsowa, Girnowik ..	..	..	Large stream joins from south. Giwara is 3 miles down this stream. Tirsowa 4 $\frac{1}{2}$ miles, and Girnowik is 6 $\frac{1}{2}$ miles. Valley closes in somewhat. Two small villages left. Stream in gorge from right. Valley opens.
Razi (frontier post) ..	4 $\frac{1}{2}$	117 $\frac{1}{2}$	Valley from left. Razi, thirty Kurd huts and a detachment of one company of Turkish infantry $\frac{1}{4}$ mile left in this valley. This is the Turco-Persian frontier. Patches of cultivation in valley.
Beljik .. ..	..	..	Valley from right. Beljik, Kurd village 3 miles high up this valley. Valley from left.
Haroki, Kevlik .. ..	..	..	Small valley right track turns up this valley. Main valley of Kotur Chai continues east
Yaman Yourt	3	124	Haroki and Kevlik on south slopes of Kotur Chai Valley 1 mile and 3 miles further on. Valley opens out to a shallow basin.
Kaz Geul .. ..	..	..	Yaman Yourt, thirty Milan Kurd huts, on right Youssuf Aga. Cross small low saddle.
Sharabkhana	4	128	Small marshy swamp on left "Kaz Geul." Country now a high flat plateau with low undulating hills; on left are large flat swamps on right are low hills rising gradually higher. Cross several small streams coming from hills on right to marsh on left.
Enghiz .. ..	..	..	Cross flat marshy valley from big hill on right. Sharabkhana 7 $\frac{1}{2}$ miles right at foot of this hill. Cross small streams from right. Enghiz 3 miles right.
Gurgon	2 $\frac{1}{2}$	130 $\frac{1}{2}$	Gurgon 4 miles right. Cross small saddle and enter Serai Plain; flat basin surrounded by low grassy hills.
Serai	4	134 $\frac{1}{2}$	Serai, chief village of Caza, with a Kaimakam T.O. Barracks, head-quarters of one battalion of infantry, with detachments posted along frontier. Serai, a ramshackle small Assyrian mud village, 150 houses, small bazaar, customs post, certain amount of trade in corn from rich agricultural plains in locality, also trade in sheep with Asthriel Kurds. Serai is in a rich, flat plain, surrounded by low grassy hills.
Astuji .. ..	..	..	Astuji 7 miles left at end of plain. Road to Van direct goes west down plain, following a stream to Lake Archag. Road to Mukuri and Takuri country round Karasu, traverses plain north.

Place.	Miles.	Miles.	Description.
Krapsoik .. ..	..	..	Krapsoik, small village 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ miles right.
Mehmedalan .. ..	..	..	Mehmedalan, village of Azizkhan, Aga of Mukuri, Major of Hamidieh, 7 miles left end of plain. Track crosses small saddle into an open plateau of higher level, low undulating hills 5 miles on right, and small hillocks on left; this plain is called Hashkamerig Plain.
Guzeldere	5	139 $\frac{1}{2}$	Guzeldere, village of Aguide Agha Takuri Hamidieh, 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ miles right. Very slight descent into marshy plain.
Ouzerik .. ..	..	..	Ouzerik, village of Sultan Bey Takuri, Major of Hamidieh; 4 miles right under hill side. Small stream from left.
Geridil	3	142 $\frac{1}{2}$	Small stream from left. Geridil $\frac{1}{2}$ mile left. Marshy plain on right with cultivation. Low hills other side of plain, with several small valleys running down to marsh.
Akhorik .. ..	..	..	Akhorik, village of Hussein Bey, chief of the Takuri asshiret, and Colonel of Hamidieh, 4 miles right, on far side of plain. Cross small stream from left.
Tarkane, Yenghiz, Sheyd Ali ..	..	..	Tarkane and Yenghiz, in small valley other side of plain 2 and 3 miles right. Sheyd Ali, in some hillocks 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ miles right. Old cuneiform inscriptions on some rocks. Plain closes in and descends to a slightly lower level.
Tashroomi	3 $\frac{1}{2}$	146	Tashroomi, another village of Hussein Bey, of Takuri; large house and 50 huts.
Chiboulki .. ..	..	..	Chiboulki Yezidi village, 4 miles left. Track crosses stream, and going north rounds another large marshy plain. Small stream and valley from right.
Pirmairam	2 $\frac{1}{2}$	148 $\frac{1}{2}$	Pirmairam 1 mile right on hillock. Cross marshy stream from a valley on right.
Patchoukli .. ..	..	..	Patchoukli 4 miles up this valley. Track now turns west, following north edge of marshy plain. Grassy undulating hills on right; cultivation where drained on left.
Guelaguenei .. ..	..	..	Valley from right. Guelaguenei 2 miles up this valley.
Newshehr	6	154 $\frac{1}{2}$	Newshehr, village of Ali Agha, of Mukuri; 150 houses.
Haspires .. ..	..	..	Valley joins from right. Haspires 4 miles up this valley.
Walijan .. ..	..	..	Walijan, Yezidi village, 2 miles left, other side of marshy plain. Plain or valley closes in.
Seidibeg	4 $\frac{1}{2}$	159	Seidibeg $\frac{1}{2}$ mile left. High conical peak of Koorakhial D. 3 miles left other side of valley. Wind round a small horse-shoe valley on right.
Derjiamet .. ..	..	..	Valley from right. Derjiamet $\frac{1}{4}$ mile right; 30 huts. Derjiamet Yokari 2 miles, Ganisarik 4 miles right up this valley. All Yezidi.
Hajiali	2	161	Hajiali, Yezidi; 40 huts. Small stream right.
Cheerakh	1 $\frac{1}{2}$	162 $\frac{1}{2}$	Cheerakh, 20 Yezidi, 20 Shirili Kurd huts. Timar Agha Shirili Hamidieh lives here. Marsh becomes a stream. Enter shallow valley. Enter small open basin and marsh. Isa Bey Dag on right. Small open valley or basin from left. In it are Shemseddin, 30 huts of Armenian Yezidis and Milan Kurds. $\frac{1}{2}$ mile left.
Shemseddin	4 $\frac{1}{2}$	167	Hazara 1 mile left. Boghaskessen 3 miles left. Marsh ends, stream recommences.
Hazara, Boghaskessen ..	..	..	Kalejik, Yezidi, $\frac{1}{2}$ mile left.
Kalejik .. ..	..	..	Valley from right. Yarmikaya, Yezidi, $\frac{1}{4}$ mile right, in valley.
Yarmikaya, Raoshan ..	1 $\frac{1}{2}$	168 $\frac{1}{2}$	Raoshan 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ miles right, in valley. Ford stream; good gravel bottom. 15 yards wide, 2 feet deep.
Aghchechai	2	170 $\frac{1}{2}$	Valley left from Akta Dag. Aghchechai 1 mile up this valley, Assyrian, 10 huts. Track now leaves Karasu or Marmid Chai, and ascends slopes of Akhta D. A valley joins from right, 1 mile up, which is Chemakh, Armenian. Track over undulating slopes, crosses two small valleys from left.
Chemakh .. ..	..	..	Daghveran (K), $\frac{1}{2}$ mile left, in a hollow on hill side. Descend into a small open basin below high peak of Akta D.
Daghveran	3	173 $\frac{1}{2}$	Rahmin (K), sixty huts. Pirmehmed (K) 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ miles right in basin. Ishmael Agha of the Shevili lives at Rahmin. Track crosses a spur, then a small deep valley and steep ascent over a saddle, here joins the main road from Kordzot to Van, via Archag. Telegraph line.
Rahmin, Pirmehmed ..	4	177 $\frac{1}{2}$	Top of Akhta D. Gedik gradual descent down a grassy spur to Lake Archag.
Akhta Gedik	2	179 $\frac{1}{2}$	Karakunduz, large Armenian village in marshy plain on shores of Lake Archag. Good cultivation; many irrigation and drainage canals. Track winds about cultivation and marshes.
Karakunduz	4	183 $\frac{1}{2}$	Cross two marshy streams. Archag, large Armenian village; seat of a Mudir of Archag Kaza, T.O. Archag to Van, same as route 90.
Archag	4	187 $\frac{1}{2}$	Van Gardens
Van Gardens	17 $\frac{1}{2}$	205	Van Gardens.

No. 137.

[15371]

*India Office to Foreign Office.—(Received May 4.)**India Office, May 2, 1908.*

Sir,
IN reply to your letter dated the 25th ultimo, as to the use of the German flag by certain native boats in the Persian Gulf, I am directed to say that Mr. Secretary Morley concurs in the view of the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs that application should be made to the International Slavery Bureau at Brussels for copies of any papers relating to these boats; and that, in the absence of valid certificates, the matter should be brought to the notice of the German Government, provided the Resident in the Gulf can certify that no unauthorized British flags are being flown by native craft in these waters. In view, however, of the embarrassment that will be caused if it is found that there has been any irregularity in the use of the British flag, Mr. Morley would suggest that, unless Sir E. Grey thinks it inexpedient to incur any delay, it might be better to await the receipt of Major Cox's report on the point before taking any action. Copy of a telegram to the Government of India asking that the report may be expedited is inclosed.*

I am, &c.
(Signed) COLIN G. CAMPBELL.

[15332]

No. 138.

India Office to Foreign Office.—(Received May 4.)

THE Under-Secretary of State for India presents his compliments to the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and, by direction of Mr. Secretary Morley, forwards herewith, for the information of the Secretary of State, copy of a telegram to the Viceroy, dated the 30th April, relative to the use of the German flag by native dhows in the Persian Gulf.

India Office, May 2, 1908.

Inclosure in No. 138.

Mr. Morley to Government of India.

(Telegraphic.) P.

India Office, April 30, 1908.

SEE letter from Resident, Persian Gulf, forwarded with letter dated the 27th February, from Secretary in Foreign Department. Lingah dhows flying German flag. If inquiry at International Bureau shows that papers have not been deposited there in accordance with Article 41 of General Act, His Majesty's Government are prepared to bring matter to notice of German Government. Unless, however, Resident can certify that in waters in question no unauthorized British flag is being used, no action will be practicable. Report on this point should be expedited.

[15376]

No. 139.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received May 4.)

(No. 117.)

Tehran, May 4, 1908.

(Telegraphic.) P.

MILITARY Attachés in Persia. Your telegram No. 90 of the 29th April, 1908. I do not see how either of the Military Attachés at Tehran and Meshed could do the work of both posts. Their duties are quite distinct; the former is practically exclusively occupied with Russian Central Asian affairs, while the latter's duties are generally those of a Military Attaché at any other post, but here mainly obtaining information of resources, topography, &c.

The maintenance of the post here is, in my opinion, most desirable. There are many questions on which the Military Attaché is able, in a country like Persia, to

* See No. 138.

No. 136*.

[15264]

Mr. O'Beirne to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received May 4.)

(No. 210.)

St. Petersburg, April 30, 1908.

Sir,
WITH reference to my despatch No. 205 of the 23rd instant, I have the honour to report that a punitive expedition has been dispatched to the Dymansky Post on the Russo-Persian frontier to operate against the Persian Chieftain Khan Kuli Khan.

The expedition, which left Tiflis on the 28th instant, is composed of one battalion of rifles, one section of quick-firing mountain artillery, and one sotnia of Cossacks. It is anticipated that it cannot reach its destination before the 5th May.

The "Novoe Vremya" remarks that the delay in dispatching this expedition is one more instance of the dilatory and inefficient manner in which the administration of the Caucasus is conducted.

I have, &c.
(Signed) HUGH O'BEIRNE.

[1580]

2 B*

give valuable advice, without which few civilians could form a just opinion otherwise. There is, moreover, no other member of the Legation who could in case of need be detached from Tehran. Also, the Military Attaché is in charge of the Minister's escort, and is the only one competent to deal with questions connected with civilian Consuls' guards.

That there should be some Anglo-Indian element in the Legation is, I am strongly of opinion, indispensable, as it tends to save direct consultation with the Indian Government, and I think that no one is better able than an official enjoying the semi-independent position of Military Attaché to represent this element.

I feel that the efficiency of the Mission would be very seriously affected by the abolition of the post, and much work, which would be more easily and efficiently performed by an Indian officer, would be thrown on the staff. The position of the Legation would, moreover, be inferior to that of other Legations; the Cossack brigade supply the Russians with information, the Germans have a military officer attached, and there is a Turkish Military Attaché.

[15378]

No. 140.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received May 4.)

(No. 118.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Tehran, May 4, 1908.

EXCHANGE of telegraphs. Your telegram No 89 of the 28th April, 1908.

His Majesty's Consuls at Meshed and Seistan know of no regulation prohibiting Russians from sending British messages, and according to Russian Minister there is none. He further states that on other lines all messages are accepted by Russian signallers. On the Meshed-Seistan line, however, Russian signallers appear hitherto to have rarely transmitted British messages, and then rather as a favour; they could presumably decline in practice in the absence of any special arrangement.

[15106]

No. 141.

Foreign Office to Messrs. Ellinger and Co.

Gentlemen,

Foreign Office, May 4, 1908.

I AM directed by Secretary Sir Edward Grey to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 9th ultimo, inquiring whether there is any objection to your submitting to the inspection of Messrs. Andrew Weir and Co. the letter from this Office of the 18th January last relative to your proposal to form a Company for the purpose of buying from the Muin-ut-Tujjar the red oxide on the Island of Hormuz.

I am to inform you, in reply, that Sir E. Grey has no objection to your permitting Messrs. Weir to see the letter in question, subject to the condition that the information so conveyed to them is treated by them as strictly confidential.

I am, &c.

(Signed) LOUIS MALLET.

[15480]

No. 142.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received May 5.)

(No. 119.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Tehran, May 5, 1908.

ESTABLISHMENT of German Bank.

I have been informed by the German Minister that it is hoped that the German Bank will be able to secure the services of Mr. Rabino, as it would be useless to open without them.

[14198]

No. 143.

Foreign Office to Messrs. Ellinger and Co.

Gentlemen,

Foreign Office, May 5, 1908.

I AM directed by Secretary Sir Edward Grey to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 24th ultimo, relative to your proposals for the formation of a Company to work Muin-ut-Tujjar's Concessions for the extraction of oxide from mines on the island of Hormuz.

I am to inform you in reply that a copy of your letter will be forwarded to His Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires at Tehran for his information and guidance.

I am, &c.

(Signed) LOUIS MALLET.

[15545]

No. 144.

Mr. Preece to Foreign Office.—(Received May 6.)

Sir,

1, St. James' Place, London, May 5, 1908.

I HAVE the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your despatch of the 23rd April with reference to the oil wells at Kasr-i-Shirin.

I am instructed by the Oil Syndicate to thank you for the same, and also Captain Haworth for the interest shown in their concerns. For the moment it is not considered advisable to take any action, but if oil is found in the south-west, and a Company is formed to work it, these wells will have their attention.

I have, &c.

(Signed) J. N. PREECE.

[13229]

No. 145.

*Sir Edward Grey to Mr. Marling.**

(No. 70.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, May 6, 1908.

I TRANSMIT to you herewith copy of a letter from Mr. J. D. Rees, M.P., in which is inclosed a Memorandum containing certain suggestions as to the steps which should be taken to make use of the facilities afforded by the Anglo-Russian Agreement respecting Persia for the advancement of British interests in the southern part of that country, together with copy of the reply which has been returned to that communication.†

I should be glad to receive any observations which you may have to offer on the suggestions made by Mr. Rees.

I am, &c.

(Signed) E. GREY.

[13229]

No. 146.

Foreign Office to Mr. J. D. Rees, M.P.

(Confidential.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, May 6, 1908.

I AM directed by Secretary Sir Edward Grey to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 11th ultimo, in which you forward a Memorandum containing certain suggestions as to the steps which should be taken to make use of the facilities afforded by the Anglo-Russian Agreement respecting Persia for the advancement of British interests in the southern part of that country.

In reply, I am to convey to you Sir E. Grey's thanks for your communication, and to inform you that the questions raised in it, as well as other cognate matters, have been and still are under the consideration of His Majesty's Government.

I am, &c.

(Signed) LOUIS MALLET.

* Also to India Office, *mutatis mutandis*

† See Nos. 79 and 146.

[15748]

No. 147.

Mr. O'Beirne to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received May 7.)

(No. 77.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

St. Petersburg, May 7, 1908.

PERSIA.

I am informed by M. Isvolsky that he has received news of a disquieting nature from Persia, where some kind of anti-Dynastic outbreak was expected to occur to-day. The late Ministry had not been replaced. It was reported that Prince Firman Firma was aiming at establishing Prince Nasar-ed-Din on the Throne of Persia, while the Mullahs at Erbel and Bagdad were preaching against the present Shah.

[15747]

No. 148.

Mr. G. Barclay to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received May 7.)

(No. 106.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Constantinople, May 7, 1908.

FOLLOWING from Mr. Wratislaw, Urumia, No. 30 of yesterday's date:—

"For the moment the country is relatively quiet.

"The Persian Minister for Foreign Affairs has telegraphed to the Persian Commissioner the tenor of Tahir Pasha's instructions (see Mr. Barclay's telegram to me of the 26th April), and the Persian Commissioner is instructed to enter into negotiations on the basis of the neutral zone and the Treaty of Erzeroum, and to report the results of his action."

[14244]

No. 149.

Sir Edward Grey to Mr. O'Beirne.

(No. 122.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Foreign Office, May 8, 1908.

WITH reference to my telegram No. 105 of the 16th ultimo, and to despatch No. 196 of the 17th ultimo from Sir A. Nicolson, on the subject of the Kermanshah customs.

In reply to the Memorandum from the Russian Government of the 15th ultimo, you should inform M. Isvolsky that our Representative at Tehran has been instructed to arrange that the loans of the Imperial Bank of Persia, instead of being secured on the Kermanshah customs, should be transferred to those of Bushire, and that in the event of this solution proving impossible of attainment, Mr. Marling has been authorized to conclude an Agreement whereby the receipts from Kermanshah shall be divided between the two banks, as was, I understand, suggested by the Financial Agent in Persia of the Russian Government.

You should further inform M. Isvolsky that the result of the efforts made by His Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires has not yet been reported to me.

[15748]

No. 150.

Sir Edward Grey to Mr. Marling.

(No. 94.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Foreign Office, May 8, 1908.

POLITICAL situation.

Mr. O'Beirne's telegram No. 77 of the 7th May.

Facts should be reported by you.

[14898]

No. 151.

Foreign Office to India Office.

Sir,

Foreign Office, May 8, 1908.

I AM directed by Secretary Sir Edward Grey to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 30th ultimo, relative to the application which, it is reported, will shortly be made to the Persian Government on behalf of Messrs. Haji Ali Akbar and Sons (Limited), of Manchester, for a Concession to extract red oxide on the Island of Sirri.

With regard to the last sentence of that letter, I am to state that Sir E. Grey is of opinion that it would be desirable, before arriving at any definite conclusion as to the course to be followed in the matter, to learn the views of the Government of India on the question whether His Majesty's Government should permit the assertion by the Persian Government of any pretension to grant such a Concession to pass without a protest, and I am accordingly to request that a telegraphic inquiry may be addressed to them in the sense suggested.

I am also to refer to the last paragraph of Mr. Mallet's letter of the 21st ultimo, and to state that Sir E. Grey would be glad to receive an expression of Secretary Viscount Morley's opinion as to the advisability of obtaining from the Company interested an assurance of the nature suggested by His Majesty's Consul at Bushire.

I am, &c.

(Signed) W. LANGLEY.

[15970]

No. 152.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received May 9.)

(No. 120.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Tehran, May 9, 1908.

RELATIONS between the Shah and the Assembly. Sir A. Nicolson's telegram No. 77.

The Shah's unpopularity has certainly increased of late, and a meeting to discuss his deposition has been talked of among the Enjumens. The meeting did not take place, however, and there has followed the usual reconciliation with the Assembly.

The Ministers have now returned to office. The assassination of the Shah is always possible, but I see no reason to apprehend any immediate danger.

(Repeated to India and St. Petersburg.)

[15371]

No. 153.

Foreign Office to India Office.

Sir,

Foreign Office, May 9, 1908.

I AM directed by Secretary Sir Edward Grey to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 2nd instant relative to the use of the German flag by certain native boats in the Persian Gulf.

I am to inform you, in reply, that Sir E. Grey concurs in the view of Secretary Viscount Morley, that it would be better to await the receipt of an assurance from His Majesty's Consul-General at Bushire, that no unauthorized British flags are flown by native craft in the Gulf, before taking any action either at Brussels or Berlin.

I am, &c.

(Signed) W. LANGLEY.

[15976]

No. 154.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received May 11.)

(No. 78.)

Sir,

Tehran, April 9, 1908.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 26 of the 14th February, I have the honour to transmit herewith copies of printed correspondence in regard to the affairs of the Oil Syndicate with which I have been furnished by His Majesty's Consul-General at Bushire.

Amin-us-Sharieh has been dismissed from the service of the Ispahan Consulate-General, as he had in every way failed to give satisfaction to Mr. Barnham.

I have, &c.

(Signed) CHARLES M. MARLING.

Inclosure 1 in No. 154.

Vice-Consul Lorimer to Major Cox.

(Confidential.)

Ahwaz, December 30, 1907.

IN continuation of my telegram No. 42, of which I sent you a copy by last post, informing you of the pressure being put on Mr. Reynolds by his principals to adopt a conciliatory attitude towards the Khans, in particular in regard to the question of demanding from them compensation for losses, I have now the honour to forward copies of a Memorandum addressed by the Syndicate Board to Mr. Reynolds on the same subject, and of a letter from the Khans which is attached to this Memorandum.

2. Before proceeding further I would say that, owing to the continued state of collapse of the telegraph line, my telegram No. 42 has not yet been dispatched to Tehran, and that I would therefore suggest that you should telegraph such a message to His Britannic Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires as that telegram and the present letter may render advisable in your opinion.

3. With regard to the Syndicate's Memorandum, which I have little hesitation in attributing to the pen of Mr. Preece, I quite appreciate the anxiety which it is only natural that the appearances of the circumstances should arouse in their minds, but with the opinion which I have formed of the Khans' character and my reading of present signs, I cannot concur in the estimate of the situation which they deduce from the diatribes of the Khans.

On the other hand, in the further light of the letters which I have received from the Khans within the last month and a half, I strongly incline to the opinion that the position of the Oil Company has never been more secure than it is at the present moment, and with the steps which we are now on the eve of taking, I am hopeful that disturbing incidents like those of the Batwand assault and the Shardin case will cease.

4. The result of our dealings with the Khans during the past year has been to reduce them from a state of bullying confidence to one of apprehensive respect. They have played every card in the game of bluff, blackmail, intimidation, complaint against myself, and finally their last trump, renunciation of responsibility, and have seen us hold on unmoved; and they are now seeking to recover their false step, in employing their ultimate weapon without effect, and to bring things back to the situation which preceded their *coup manqué*. As this suits our purposes, I consider it our policy to make their retreat easy for them, and I am acting on this line.

To alter our policy now to one of concession would, in my opinion, be the best way to restore confidence to the Khans, and that would only mean the renewal of their old exactions with the addition of a hundred new ones, and the employment of the methods of last winter and spring—robbery and disturbances—to lend force to their demands.

5. The Syndicate is also probably not aware of the state of Messrs. Lynch's affairs, which will continue to demand unrelaxed stringency on the part of the Legation and myself as its representative, and which, as the Khans' minds do not work in watertight compartments, will continue to colour our general relations with them, and this will be the case even were the Oil Syndicate to start a policy of invincible complaisance. Some of the effects of this interdependence of different interests might perhaps be obviated by the Syndicate conducting their own negotiations, and if they are prepared to undertake this they might depute Mr. Preece to come out here for the purpose.

6. I feel confident that the opinion expressed above will meet with the concurrence of the Legation, and I have only written at this length in case it should be considered advisable to offer the Syndicate any full exposition of my views.

7. It is to be kept in mind that the Memorandum deals only with the deduction of the compensation claims, from the November instalment, and that the writer of it is apparently in ignorance of the Khans' declaration of the 15th November, and of the suspension of the whole instalment, and still further of the subdued manner in which this action has been received by the Khans. As regards the compensation, from the point

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of view of immediate effect, there might not be much danger in maintaining silence on the subject for the time being, so long as the Khans were not aware that it was an intentional or calculated silence on our part. From the point of view of ultimate effect, the longer the question of recovery is postponed, the more difficult will the operation become. Nor, even the Syndicate consenting, could the eventual renunciation of claims be regarded with favour, as such action would tend to compromise the force of our demands made in similar cases in the future on behalf of Messrs. Lynch Brothers or any other British interests.

8. For the reasons already stated in paragraph 6, I propose to offer a few comments on minor points in the Syndicate's Memorandum; curtness is to be attributed only to a desire for brevity.

The real state of mind and the effective intentions of the Khans are not to be gathered from the tone of their letters, written violently with the deliberate design of producing a particular impression. I admit that the instability of the Central Government is an unsatisfactory factor, but I do not consider it dangerous.

There is nothing in the Agreement to show that the 2,000*l.* was in fact granted the Khans for the use of their land. Remuneration for this was guaranteed in various other ways; and the Khans themselves have at no time put forward this argument. Concessions would not be a matter of a few kran.

There is no responsible Chief amongst the Bakhtiari outside the ruling families. The guards at present are nominally supplied by, and under the control of, the most influential men in the district. I thoroughly appreciate the desirability of work going on quietly, and conceive that our present policy, however improbable it may seem from the remoteness of London, is the best calculated to secure that end.

The payment of the extra 500*l.* is recommended, but the provisional clauses which follow beg the whole question. Who is going to guarantee any promise made by the Khans that they will supply adequate guards, &c.?

The statement that the situation will be improved by the finding of oil is a fallacy. In my opinion, exactly the reverse will be the case, more especially if it has been preceded by a period of concession-making on our own part.

Where demands contrary to justice are made, concession or conciliation will never secure satisfaction or gratitude, and will only act as an incitement to constant and progressive blackmailing.

9. As the Memorandum recognizes that the Khans' letter is a tissue of lies, it is unnecessary to discuss the dubious compliments paid to Mr. Preece, or the invective against my own manner and language, while the elaborate misstatements it contains can be judged in the light of the facts, which are mostly public property. There is one feature about this letter, however, to which I think it proper to call attention, and that is the identity of the addressee, which is concealed under the style of a "Persian friend."

On my general knowledge, I have little doubt as to who he is, but it is sufficient here to examine the internal evidence.

It appears from the Khans' letter that he is a man whose friendship they have enjoyed for some time; that he is acquainted with the confidential affairs of the Syndicate and Messrs. Lynch Brothers, and that he was, and probably is, attached to a British Consulate, and finally that he was with Mr. Preece when the Agreement with the Khans was drawn up with the Syndicate (at Shalamar).

This can only be one person, the Amin-us-Sheriah, who has for years held the position of Confidential Agent or Adviser in the Ispahan Consulate-General. This man was a protégé of Mr. Preece's, but has failed to give satisfaction to Mr. Barnham, which enables me to raise this point without losing a couple of months by first referring to the latter.

My object in writing on the subject is to call attention to what appears to me the highly reprehensible conduct of this man, a Government servant, in establishing himself as an independent and secret intermediary between the Syndicate and the Khan. His correct action under the circumstances, which is recognized even by the Khans, was to lay the matter before his official superior, with whom all further action should have rested. That he did so appears inconceivable, as in that case I should have been informed by His Majesty's Consul-General, and the Khans' letter, had it reached the Syndicate at all, would have done so through official channels. But the blame in the matter appears to me to extend beyond this man and attach also to the recipients of the letter, who have suppressed the identity of its transmitter, and who, for all that is known, may have returned some reply, compromising or otherwise, through the same medium.

10. Assuming that no hint of this correspondence was made to His Britannic Majesty's Consul-General at Ispahan, I would suggest that he might be consulted as to whether he could obtain a direct admission from the Amin-us-Sheriah of his having been a party to it.

Inclosure 2 in No. 154.

Mr. J. Jenkins to Mr. G. Reynolds.

(Private.)

9, Gracechurch Street, London, December 6, 1907.

I HAVE been requested to hand you the inclosed translation of a letter from the Bakhtiari Khans to a Persian friend; also a Memorandum dealing with this letter. Kind regards.

Inclosure 3 in No. 154.

Memorandum addressed by the Concessions Syndicate to Mr. G. Reynolds.

THE inclosed translation of a letter from the Bakhtiari Chiefs, which has been sent to Mr. Preece, is forwarded to Mr. Reynolds for his information. It is suggested that Mr. Reynolds should show to Captain Lorimer not only the inclosure, but also this communication.

It is evident from the tone of this letter that the Bakhtiari are in a very great state of tension, and are but seeking for a pretext to quarrel. Taking into consideration the present state of affairs in Persia, the Shah's Government changing every few days, their orders not even running in Tehran, the general state of unrest throughout the country, the Legation with no great faith in the future and with but little power to help us, although we are backed up to the utmost by the Foreign Office, the Bakhtiari Chiefs have evidently our beads in their hands, and if they are not made contented, the work must perforce stop.

Their complaints are nothing but a tissue of lies—not one can hold water really—but it must be remembered that when it was arranged to pay them 2,000*l.* per annum, it was done as much for permission to use their ground as for guards. To us at the present time it is of paramount importance that the work should go on quietly and systematically at Maidan-i-Naptun; such enormous interests are involved that it is not worth our while to sacrifice them for the sake of a few kran. Without wishing in any way to throw over Captain Lorimer, who is or was ready to fight the Chiefs to a finish, we think it desirable that the next instalment should be paid to the Chiefs without any deduction whatever, keeping the question of deduction for robbery open for future settlement, and also that the extra 500*l.* per annum should be paid the Chiefs, provided they give adequate guard under a responsible Chief, not necessarily one of their own family, that those to whom robberies have been traced, or who have been caught, like the man in Mr. Lewko's tent, should be properly punished.

It must be obvious both to Captain Lorimer and Mr. Reynolds how imperative it is that the work should go on quietly until oil is found; once that desired result is attained, the situation will be completely changed; therefore we hope that every endeavour will be made to conciliate the Chiefs, for the time at least, on the lines we have indicated above, and that Mr. Reynolds will be able to complete his work without impediment.

Ahwaz, November 23, 1907.

Inclosure 4 in No. 154.

Letter from the Bakhtiari Khans to a Persian Friend, dated some time in October 1907.

(Translation.)

SINCE your friendship is assured and as you are fully acquainted with the contracts with Lynch's and the Oil Company, we trouble you with the request that if, as previously, you are with the British Consulate, you will, in whatever manner you think best, bring this letter to the notice of the British Legation and British Consulate, and explain the purport of it verbally.

Previously, there was a road through the Bakhtiari country over which caravans and merchandise passed and crossed the rivers by ferries, the ferryman levying a toll for the work, a portion of which toll was paid to us by way of revenue; two years previous to Lynch's making the road and bridge, we made a good bridge of ropes, by which the traffic passed the river most satisfactorily. Then the old order of things passed from our control, and Lynch's seriously departed from the terms of their Agreement, and caused us an infinity of trouble and loss by reason of the roads and caravanserais we built. You must be aware that since the road was made we had nothing but trouble and loss; the building of the two iron bridges was also the cause of much trouble and loss to us.

You know that during these few years Mr. Preece was the Consul-General at Ispahan and was our good friend; his friendship and knowledge and interest in our affairs is the reason of our friendship with the British Government, and we are grateful to him in that he conducted our affairs with justice, rectitude, and friendship, and correctness, and took friendly trouble for us and in our affairs.

It was due to his efforts that whenever Lynch's attempted to oppress us, Mr. Preece, in accordance with justice and agreement, prevented our being tyrannized over; he prevented Lynch's making exorbitant charges, and arranged that we paid 300 odd tomans the first year and 400 tomans the second year.

We did not at that time realize the ability and fairmindedness of Mr. Preece; but all this has been changed, and, in place of that favour, we have only trouble and worries. Our affairs appear to have been transferred to the charge of the Vice-Consul at Ahwaz (Captain Lorimer), who at first treated us in a friendly manner; but now he has taken up another style, at once so overbearing and harsh that the bands of the proverbial and ancient friendship between us and the English Government are strained to the breaking-point. For example, in the contract for the road it is stipulated that no engineer (for the roads) should be sent without our concurrence; now he states that last year an engineer came (but without our knowledge) and painted the bridge, and presents charges to the amount of 1,500 tomans, and in the most harsh, hectoring, and coarse language (which we cannot write to you) peremptorily demands payment of the same.

Another matter is the contract of the Oil Company. You were with Mr. Preece when the contract was made. All the difficult and very binding clauses drawn up with mutual friendship were accepted by us; but now the Oil Company's representatives are treating our people in a very severe manner, and are acting in a very reprehensible way. We requested Captain Lorimer to put a stop to such actions, but he prefers to magnify other small matters, making mountains out of mole-hills, and makes difficulties where there should be none.

The question of robberies inserted in the contract is beyond our control, but he demands compensation, and wishes to deduct the amount from the instalment which is due. He complains of the guards without just cause. By reason of all these difficulties it was agreed under the seal of the British Legation that the instalments should be increased yearly by 500*l.* for the expenses of the Chief of the road guards, who were to be increased and always present. That latter we performed; now that it is time for payment of the instalment, he repudiates it and refuses to pay. We fear we tire you, but there are still many questions unmentioned. We request that, in whatever way you consider best and possible, to inform the British Legation and officials fully on these matters, in order that the friendship of so many years may not be broken.

(Sealed by) NAYAF KULI (Eelkhani).
KHUSROW.
GHULAM HUSEIN (Eelbigi).
NUSEER.

Inclosure 5 in No. 154.

Samsam-us-Saltaneh, Ikhan, and Shahab-es-Saltaneh, Ilbegi, of the Bakhtiaris, to Vice-Consul Lorimer.

(Translation.)

[Received December 23, 1907.]

WE are in receipt of your letter, and are delighted to hear of your welfare and good health.

Regarding what you write that Murtaza Quli Khan had made certain statements in the Legation. In the first place, Murtaza Quli Khan had no authority from us to talk

on our part with the Legation, but those had no connection with matters relating to you. We had some purely personal affairs which were the subject of conversation.

Regarding the instalment which has been suspended, and payment thereof stopped, you have not written what was the reason of doing so. However much we speculate, we cannot find that we have failed in, or neglected, your work and orders. Whenever you have sent any instructions, though they were beyond our power, we have carried them out [*sic*] and not neglected them, for the sake of supporting and helping you.

You said to remove Qaid Rafi; we complied. We restrained the people of Mamatain and Shardin, who were daily complaining and crying out against the tyranny and oppression of the employes of the Syndicate. At no time may we have failed to serve you, and however much the Bakhtiari tribes complained we have kept them in order, and up to now have not suffered them to make an outcry; but the time is near when the means of control will pass from our hands, and the Bakhtiaris will break out and rise up against this contract and agreement which we have made.

In view of our having thus always been ready, as we are now, to serve your interests and commands, we have failed to understand the reason for the unkindness which you have displayed towards us. On the one hand, you have not granted the 500*l.* for the pay of the guards; on the other, you have given orders for the non-payment; of the instalment, which is fixed as payable by you. The reason of this also you do not explain.

If it is in your mind to break off the agreement we are only too willing and anxious for this, for the reason that the Bakhtiaris have raised their voices in this affair, and, by one means or other, we have reduced every one to silence; but we are tired and oppressed by the course which things have taken at Mamatain and Maidan Munaftun. The Bakhtiari tribe have broken out into complaints, and are appealing against the acts of oppression of the Oil people. If this Agreement, and what it entails, is cancelled, it will be better for ourselves and the tribes, and we will be at peace.

Up to the present we have allowed nothing to produce a feeling of coldness, and, beyond all that could be imagined, we have been active in service. The cause and reason of your unkindness we have not understood. It would be well if you would write specifically to what it is due and what it is that has led to this unkindness on your part.

Regarding the fuel and the price of it about which you have written. It is an understood thing. As you have expressed a wish and desire, we are at your commands; even were you to show still greater unkindness, there will be no failing in our good-will, and whenever you have any requirements and commands we are waiting in readiness to comply.

We have written and inclose an order addressed to Mahmud Khan instructing him to sell fuel to the Oil people at a fair price. If this order meet with your approval, please have it forwarded to Mahmud Khan, who will comply with it.

(Signed) NAJAF QULI KHAN (Samsam).
GHULAM HUSSAIN (Shahab).

Forwarded by His Britannic Majesty's Vice-Consul, Ahwaz, under his endorsement dated the 1st January, 1908, to the Resident with reference to Vice-Consul's telegram No. 42, and paragraph 3 of his letter dated the 30th December, 1907.

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No. 155.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received May 11.)

(No. 79.)
Sir,

Tehran, April 11, 1908.

AT a dinner given at the Dutch Legation on the 8th instant, the German Minister asked me what was the arrangement between ourselves and Russia for the cession of all British Concessions in Northern Persia. I asked where he had got this extraordinary story, and he replied that he understood it to be a part of the recent Agreement that all British Concessions in the North should be transferred to Russia and, in particular, that we were about "to exchange our telegraph lines in the North for the Russian line." I said that there had been some talk of Russia's undertaking the maintenance of the Meshed-Tehran line instead of ourselves, but I did not know what would come of it; it was a matter which interested the Telegraph Department,

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and was no part of the late Agreement. Probably some exaggerated version of this proposal had reached him. Count Quadt then turned to the question of road Concessions, and asserted two or three times that he knew for a fact that negotiations for their transfer were proceeding in London. I again asked him where he got this information for which there was not even the slight foundation that existed for the story about the exchange of telegraphs, but could get no reply, as at this point the Minister's attention was occupied by his other neighbour, nor did he again revert to the subject. Our conversation did not last more than three or four minutes.

From inquiries that I have since made, it seems that for the last three or four days it has been known in the bazaars that some kind of exchange connected with telegraphs is in contemplation, and probably it is thence that the German Minister got wind of the contemplated arrangement. But how the rumour reached the bazaars I am unable to say.

I am inclined to think that Count Quadt was anxious to assure himself as to the state of affairs as regards the Khanikin line, but no mention whatever was made of it; it seems difficult to see what other interest he could find in the exchange of control over the Meshed-Tehran and Khaf-Nasratabad lines, unless it is to arouse the opposition of the Persian Government to the proposal.

He appeared to be far more interested in the question of road Concessions, and, as I have said, insisted that negotiations on the subject were in progress in London.

The Russian Minister, to whom I communicated the conversation I had had with Count Quadt, could not any more than myself account for the latter's knowledge or surmise of the contemplated exchange of lines, but he thought that the circumstance made it desirable to hasten the exchange.

I have, &c.
(Signed) CHARLES M. MARLING.

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No. 156.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received May 11.)

(No. 82. Confidential.)

Sir,

Tehran, April 14, 1908.

I HAVE the honour to transmit herewith a list of the "Chefs de Missions" now in Tehran.

I regret that by an oversight, due to the heavy press of work, this Report should not have been sent earlier in the year.

I have, &c.
(Signed) CHARLES M. MARLING.

Inclosure in No. 156.

List of the Heads of Missions in Tehran.

Russian Minister.—M. Nicolas de Hartwig presented his credentials in June 1906, and has become doyen since the departure of M. de Riva this month. His previous career is too well known to need recapitulation. As a Russian bureaucrat he has little sympathy with the Constitutional movement in Persia, and would wish, moreover, naturally to maintain the authority of a Russophile Shah as against a Russophobe nation. The events of December, however, convinced him that he had underrated the strength of the Reform party, and, further, that in any case Mohammed Ali Shah is not the man to overcome it. Since that time his advice to the Shah has been all in favour of moderation and conciliation, but he has little hope of the speedy regeneration of the country under a Constitutional régime. The failure of the December *coup d'Etat*, and the manifestations of German inclination to intrude in Persian internal affairs, very materially altered M. de Hartwig's attitude towards this Legation, and I have since found him at all times ready to discuss questions of common interest in an open and friendly manner, and I believe him to be genuinely desirous of maintaining the existing excellent relations of Great Britain and Russia in the Near East. He has very strong anti-German convictions. He has a great capacity for work, and practically conducts the whole business of the Legation himself.

Madame de Hartwig, the Minister's second wife, is a "divorcée." An energetic, impulsive, warm-hearted woman, and generally popular in the European colony.

Austro-Hungarian Minister.—M. Rosthorn presented his credentials October 1906. He was for many years in the Chinese Maritime Customs, and thence was appointed Consul-General at Peking, where he was in charge of the Legation during the siege in 1900. Is somewhat soured at finding that, though a Minister, he is condemned to play a very small rôle in Tehran, and when fortune gives him something to do is as fussy as a hen with one chick. His dream is to return to Peking as Minister. Has little tact, and while constantly neglecting diplomatic amenities, much resents anything like a slight to himself.

Madame Rosthorn, who appears to thoroughly deserve her reputation for courage gained during the siege of the Legations at Peking, is a cheery-tempered *bourgeoise* of the best type and very popular.

Dutch Minister.—M. de Sturler has been here as Minister Resident since May 1906 and presented his credentials as Envoy in 1907. Was previously in the Consular Service and served at Jeddah and Smyrna. Has been rather inclined to stand much on his dignity, and has shown little sign of ability. Has some private means from his wife, who is much his superior in every way.

French Minister.—M. de La Martinière presented his credentials in May 1907. Was last in Buda-Pesth and Tangier. Has considerable ability, but not much sense of the relative importance of affairs. Is apt at times to draw conclusions from insufficient or unverified data, and is much impressed with the importance of cementing the Anglo-Russian accord in Persia, and is very desirous of forming a "bloc à trois" against German intrusion. Owing to anxiety for his wife's health, has not been at his best, but can be a diverting companion.

United States.—Mr. Jackson presented his credentials in December 1907. Was for long in the Berlin Embassy, and subsequently has been American Representative in Athens and all the Balkan States. Though, as a rule, inclined to be reserved, makes no concealment of his poor opinion of President Roosevelt, which has no doubt been accentuated by the unceremonious manner of his transfer from Athens to Tehran. He is of a markedly nervous temperament, but is universally and deservedly liked.

German Minister.—Count Quadt presented his credentials in March 1908. Was appointed to Tehran from the Consulate-General at Calcutta, where he seems to have gained the confidence and liking of all Indian society. He was at Washington as Councillor of Embassy at the time of Herr von Holleben's intrigue against Lord Pauncefoot, and is said to have ably seconded his chief. When the blow aimed at Lord Pauncefoot recoiled on the German Ambassador, Count Quadt was greatly chagrined, and, on the appointment of Baron Speck as Ambassador, led a regular campaign against his chief, who was practically boycotted in his own Embassy. He has been described to me as an "arch-intriguer." He has, however, been here so short a time that I hesitate to express any strong opinion myself, though indications may be found to show that Baron von Richthofen's policy is being continued, but with greater discretion.

Married the daughter of the late Chevalier de Martino, of the Italian Diplomatic Service. The Countess will not arrive here till September.

Italian Minister.—Baron Romano presented his credentials in April 1908.

Belgian Chargé d'Affaires.—M. de Warzee d'Hermalle is really on the Belgian Foreign Office establishment, but was for some years in Peru, and has been in charge of the Legation since September 1906, except for the five months during which the late Minister, M. Tserstevens, was here. Has had a very difficult position *vis-à-vis* of M. Priem, but has acquitted himself creditably, and has shown a good appreciation of the situation. Externally somewhat insignificant, but improves on acquaintance.

Turkish Chargé d'Affaires.—Remzi Bey took over charge of the Embassy in February 1908. Was for long translator in the Ottoman Foreign Office, and recently Consul at Batoum. Is personally pleasant, but seems afraid of the responsibility of his position.

(Signed) CHARLES M. MARLING.

Tehran, April 14, 1908.

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No. 157.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received May 11.)

(No. 83.)

Sir,

Tehran, April 14, 1908.

I HAVE the honour to transmit herewith copy of a despatch addressed by His Majesty's Consul-General at Meshed on the subject of the retention of the Turbat-i-Hayderi Consulate on its present basis.

In addition to the arguments which Major Sykes employs, with the conclusions of which I generally agree, I would venture to point out that there is another inducement to maintain the post as at present, viz., the effect which it would have on feeling towards us in Persia generally. The recent Anglo-Russian Agreement, as you are aware, has produced among Persians at large the belief that we have abandoned northern Persia to her hereditary enemy, nor, so far as I can see, is there at present any indication whatever that this erroneous view is being superseded by a juster view of the situation; certainly to reduce any Consulate in the Russian "sphere" would be cited as proof positive of that interpretation of the Agreement, and would react unfavourably on our interests here.

As regards paragraphs 8 and 9 of Major Sykes' despatch, it appears to me in the highest degree unlikely that the wish of the Indian Government to "secure control of quarantine arrangements on the Perso-Afghan frontier" will ever be realized. It appears to me far more probable that those arrangements will be placed by the Sanitary Council at Tehran under the immediate direction of one of its own members. The Council has, for the last year shown far greater activity than heretofore in dealing with quarantine matters, as witness the efforts made to create a sanitary service on the northern coasts during the outbreak of cholera in the summer, and the dispatch quite recently of Dr. Bongrand to Kasr-i-Shirin. But apart from this I may point out that it would not be easy to approach the Russian Government with a suggestion that we should be placed in charge of sanitary matters in the Russian "sphere."

I have, &c.

(Signed) CHARLES M. MARLING.

Inclosure 1 in No. 157.

Major Sykes to Government of India.

(Confidential)

Sir,

Meshed, March 28, 1908.

I HAVE the honour to forward a copy of a letter from Captain Keyes of the 14th March, 1908, in which that officer recommends the reduction of the Turbat Consulate to a native agency.

2. Captain Keyes' principal arguments are apparently three in number:—

- (a.) That the founding of the Consulate was not fully warranted;
- (b.) That Captain Iyass did not acquire an exceptional position at Turbat; and
- (c.) That, if we were to reduce the post to a native agency, it would counteract influences adverse to ourselves as well as to the present arrangement.

3. To take the first point as set forth in paragraph 9, and elsewhere in the letter under reference, Captain Keyes is aware of nothing that occurred in the way of Russian obstructiveness after the affair of the Patna Nawabs in 1901, when the action taken "practically put an end to the objectionable zeal of the Russian officers." This and similar passages show that, in Captain Keyes' opinion, the foundation of the Turbat Consulate was needless.

I hardly think that my predecessors would have recommended the establishment of the Turbat post, or that the Government of India would have incurred the great expenditure involved without carefully examining the question, and this seems to be a sufficient reply to Captain Keyes' argument.

4. The position originally held by Captain Iyass is also, I think, an acknowledged fact. Even in distant Kerman Captain Iyass was known, and I imagine that the Government of India do not require fresh proof that that official was the uncrowned King of Turbat. So far as Persian public opinion was concerned, even before Captain Keyes' arrival in Persia it was a common report that the Czar had said that "Miller and Iyass never sleep."

5. Captain Keyes recommends the reduction of Turbat to a native agency, and thinks that the Meshed Consulate-General could then "as effectively counteract the evil effects to British trade and influence caused by the combined Russian Consulate and cordon, as with a Consulate at Turbat." I can hardly imagine that this argument will commend itself to the Government of India, as to lay down that a native Agent can hold his own as effectively as a Consulate provided with a Medical Officer against a Russian official of Captain Iyass' experience and ability, who also commands Persian troops, surely needs no refutation. If, however, a parallel be desirable, we have the case of Birjand, where a hospital assistant was stationed by me in 1899, and where the Government of India is now contemplating the establishment of a Vice-Consulate, presumably on the grounds that a native hospital assistant is not the equal of a British official.

6. Throughout Captain Keyes' letter there is, in my humble opinion, what has recently been termed by His Majesty's Secretary for Foreign Affairs as "a very intense view of the interests on the spot, which is not easily reconcilable with the larger interests elsewhere." I consequently propose to deal with the question in its wider aspects.

The Anglo-Russian Convention which has recently been concluded has, theoretically, put an end to the rivalry of the two Powers in Persia; and we are undoubtedly ready to observe it in the spirit as well as in the letter. Whether our rivals are equally ready to do so remains to be seen. In any case, our sphere in Persia has been made a small one and practically consists of a slice of Eastern Persia, with Persian Baluchistan and Kerman. Of these, strategically speaking, Eastern Persia is by far the most important, and it behoves us to guard our exiguous sphere by every legitimate means. Can any one, then, urge that the reduction of Turbat would not weaken our position in Eastern Persia, which consists of a series of centres of British influence, parallel to the Afghan frontier? The answer must, surely be in the negative.

7. We next have to consider the point of view of Persians and Afghans. Eleven years ago Sir Mortimer Durand strongly recommended the abolition of the Resht Consulate as being unnecessary, but the Nasir-ul-Mulk was instructed by the then Shah to point out to Lord Salisbury that the effect on Persian opinion would be serious. The post was, consequently, not abolished. When we compare Turbat, which is, generally speaking, the touring branch of this Consulate-General, and its position with regard to Meshed and Herat, we can easily foresee what Persians and Afghans would think if Captain Keyes' proposals were adopted. Their immovable opinion would be that we came to Turbat to show that Captain Iyass, in spite of his being in command of Persian troops was not the permanent ruler of the district; but that, from some strange infirmity of purpose or from timidity, we had shirked the completion of the task, whereas semi-bankrupt Russia shows no signs of relaxing her grasp, even on Southern Persia.

True, we might plead the Anglo-Russian Convention; but to that the reply would be, "Why has not Russia left Seistan?"

To prove that the Afghans watch keenly our action at Turbat, I need only refer to the diary of the native Attaché, Meshed Consulate-General, on special duty at Herat, for the 18th to 23rd April, 1903.

It shows clearly that evils did exist at that period or two years after the Patna Nawabs' case, and that the Afghans considered the Russian action, which we subsequently checked, to be intolerable.

In short, to retire from Turbat so long as the illegal quarantine cordon exists would undoubtedly constitute a heavy blow to British prestige, and one that, in my humble opinion, we should have rightly deserved.

8. Another point is that the Government of India are anxious, for obvious reasons, to secure control of quarantine arrangements on the Perso-Afghan frontier; but a policy of scuttle or semi-scuttle would surely wreck this scheme or, at any rate, make it infinitely more difficult.

9. To conclude, if Russia hands over quarantine arrangements on the Perso-Afghan boundary to us, they must undoubtedly be directed by this Consulate-General, which alone is in touch with the leading Persian officials of Khorassan and with the Governor of Herat. Turbat, Karez, and Birjand would then be the chief centres from which this quarantine would be worked. If my suggestion that Kain be replaced under Meshed be approved and the question of the frontier be treated as one, I think that the scope of the Turbat Consulate might be enlarged and some expense be saved to Government by placing a medical officer as Vice-Consul at Birjand under the touring Consul at Turbat; but to reduce Turbat at a time when Persia is in the throes of a revolution, and,

so long as the Russians maintain the quarantine cordon, would appear to me to be unworthy of the steadfast policy of the Government of India.

10. Copies of this letter are being sent to His Majesty's Legation and His Britannic Majesty's Consuls for Seistan and Turbat.

I have, &c.

(Signed) P. M. SYKES, Major, His Britannic Majesty's
Consul-General and Agent of the Government
of India in Khorassan.

Inclosure 2 in No. 157.

Consul Keyes to Major Sykes.

(No. 19 c. Confidential.)

Sir,

Turbat-i-Haidari, March 14, 1908.

IN accordance with the instructions contained in your indorsement of the 7th instant, I have the honour to submit the following report on the maintenance of our Consulate at Turbat-i-Haidari.

2. I have seen no papers relating to the Russian Sanitary Cordon from its institution in 1897 till 1901, when the case of the Patna Nawabs again brought the matter into prominence; nor have I been able to obtain information of any cases of flagrant abuse of power on the part of the Russian officers of the cordon previous to that event. In the files you have sent me I have also found no record of any further cases of serious obstruction between 1901 and Captain Winter's arrival here in January 1904.

3. Captain Winter's instructions contained in the letter from the Secretary to the Government of India, in the Foreign Department, were to the effect that he was to watch and report on the action of the Russian officers, and prevent, as far as possible, flagrant abuses on their part, especially as regards the preferential treatment of Persian as against British and Afghan subjects. I understand from these instructions that the British Consul was also to attempt to curtail the influence of the Russian officials in local matters unconnected with their sanitary duties. That this influence was believed to be considerable is shown by Sir Arthur Hardinge's despatch No. 199 of the 9th September, 1905, to the Marquess of Lansdowne, in which he alludes to Captain Iyass as having been, before Captain Winter's arrival, "almost a *de facto* local Governor."

In Captain Winter's instructions mention was also made of the attempts on Russia's part to attract the Afghan wool trade direct to Transcaspiia.

I have not seen it stated officially, but I understand that this Consulate was never intended to be permanent.

4. I would now submit that the object aimed at in the institution of a temporary Consulate at Turbat-i-Haidari, *i.e.*, the prevention of the acquisition of undue influence in sanitary and local matters by the Russian officers of the cordon, and the consequent injury to British trade and influence, has been attained, as completely as is possible by local action, and that all that is now required is an agency to report to His Majesty's Consul-General any fresh attempts to acquire influence beyond that which might legitimately be expected under the recently concluded Convention.

5. To take the original business of the Sanitary Cordon first, I have not been able to obtain information of any flagrant abuses of their position by the Russian officers since the institution of this Consulate, or, indeed, subsequent to the affair of the Patna Nawabs—the action taken by us in that case having apparently caused the Russian Government to direct their officers to moderate their zeal.

The merchants of the place inform me that since Captain Winter's arrival the examination of caravans has been conducted with more courtesy, and delays have been less annoying; but their complaints of the manner of conducting examination, prior to this, must seem rather strange to any one who has had the misfortune to make the acquaintance of the Turkish sanitary authorities.

The irrelevant questioning of everyone who passes the cordon has also ceased since Captain Iyass completed his gazetteer, and the inconvenience to the few British caravans proceeding to Meshed is as small as can be while a cordon exists. On the outbreak of plague in Seistan misdirected zeal and irksome regulations might have been expected, but, considering that Russian doctors are in absolute ignorance of the latest discoveries regarding plague, look on Indian methods as criminally fatalistic,

and themselves suffer from incredible nervousness, their moderation was surprising. It is also worthy of note that the outbreak of plague at Jangal, within a few miles of the cordon, was dealt with by Captain Watson without a protest from the Russians.

6. As regards the influence acquired by Captain Iyass, nothing I have learnt here warrants the statement that he was almost a *de facto* local Governor, or that his influence much exceeded that of other Russian Consuls, who are able to procure the dismissal of officials incurring their displeasure. The fact, however, that he has officers and men of the Tehran Brigade and of the local regiments under his orders naturally gives him a certain advantage.

7. As regards the wool trade, Turbat-i-Haidari's importance has been transferred to Karez, which now has a customs-house competent to deal with all business. Although Karez is in the Turbat-i-Haidari Consular district, the British Agent there is directly under the orders of His Majesty's Consul-General at Meshed, which, rather than either of these two places, is the centre of the trade. There is not a single British Indian trader at Turbat-i-Haidari, and the small amount of British goods that find their way into the district are purchased through middlemen in Meshed or Yezd.

8. To sum up—it was the existence of the Sanitary Cordon in any form to which we objected, not merely to the fact that it was under Russian officials; but if it were ever expected that our opening a Consulate here would lead Russia to give up the cordon, this hope should have been abandoned long ago. The question thus resolves itself into whether His Majesty's Consul-General could not, with the assistance of a native agent, as effectively counteract the evil effects to British trade and influence caused by the combined Russian Consulate and cordon, as with a Consul.

9. As I have mentioned above, the action taken by us in the affair of the Patna Nawabs practically put an end to the objectionable zeal of the Russian officers. If such a result could be produced before the ratification of the Sanitary Convention of Paris, with the Anglo-Russian relations in the state they were in in 1901, it is not too much to expect that, now our relations are on a different footing, the Russian Government will not again use the cordon as they did in this one instance.

As regards the influence of the Russian Consul, as he now is, in local matters, it must be remembered that seven years ago there was no telegraph line to Turbat-i-Haidari, and local officials and landowners were in almost complete ignorance of the course of events in other parts of Persia.

This has all been altered in the last few years, and public opinion has been so educated that it has been put out of the power of the Russian Consul to obtain the influence he was at one time believed to possess.

A British Agent in telegraphic communication with Meshed, 84 miles away, should be able to keep His Majesty's Consul-General sufficiently informed of the state of affairs here.

10. Should it be decided to reduce this Consulate to an agency, I would suggest that a Mahommedan Hospital Assistant, with plague experience, be appointed as British Agent. From what I have seen of our Indian Hospital Assistants in Persia, I consider that most of them are capable of more than holding their own against Russian doctors. Such a man would be able to carry on the work done by our Consulate hospital, which has been our chief agent for acquiring the position we now hold in Turbat-i-Haidari; while his professional visits would give him the opportunity of obtaining information inaccessible to the ordinary agent.

I have, &c.

(Signed) TERENCE KEYES, Captain.

[15981]

No. 158.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received May 11.)

(No. 84.)

Sir,

Tehran, April 18, 1908.

I HAVE the honour to transmit to you herewith copy of a despatch from His Majesty's Consul at Mohammerah respecting the recent visit of a Turkish corvette to Failia.

It will be seen that this unusual incident caused some surprise and uneasiness to the Sheikh and to the Representative of the Persian Government.

I have, &c.

(Signed) CHARLES M. MARLING.

Inclosure in No. 158.

Consul McDouall to Mr. Marling.(No. 8. Confidential.)
Sir,*Mohammerah, March 10, 1908.*

I HAVE the honour to report that on the afternoon of the 7th the Turkish corvette "Kileed-i-behar" from Bussorah anchored off Failia and fired a salute of twenty-one guns, which was returned. The Officer Commanding called on the Sardar Arfa, and on his expressing surprise at the visit said that if there were any objection he would leave. The Sardar said that he had no objection, but it had not been usual for the vessel to call. He replied that he was taking a trip for change of air, and had taken the opportunity to call and salute the port, and asked for permission to send a boat to the bazar for provisions. The Sardar said as long as the boat was unarmed there was no objection.

The Sardar Arfa as a precaution placed a force of 300 men in concealment among the date trees, and kept a watch on the vessel during the night. He ascertained that there were only some thirty-five men on board.

Next morning the vessel anchored off the mouth of the Karun, and in the afternoon proceeded down the Shat-el-Arab to the Turkish guard station at Sihan, where she spent the night, and on the 9th passed up towards Bussorah.

Both the Karguzar and the Sardar Arfa called on me with regard to the visit, as it is very unusual for a Turkish man-of-war to visit Mohammerah. It was suggested that the visit might have been due to the fact that some 600 Arabs had come up the river from Gusba on the 6th to work on the new canals, or to the presence of the French gun-boat "Surprise," or in order to make a precedent.

The Sardar Arfa has heard that the reserves of the 3rd Class (Ma'awen) of the Bussorah Vilayet are being called out, but His Majesty's Consul at Bussorah says that this is only the annual enrolment of conscripts.

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. McDOUALL.

[15983]

No. 159.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received May 11.)(No. 86.)
Sir,*Tehran, April 18, 1908.*

WITH reference to my telegram No. 79 of the 17th March and to subsequent correspondence respecting the Birjand telegraph office, I have the honour to quote the following extract from Major Kennion's weekly summary from the 8th to the 14th March which has now reached this Legation:—

"The Russian doctor asked the Telegraph Sertip at Birjand for a separate room and for certain improvements for this room. A proposal was also, it seems, put forward that the line should be taken first to the Russian room, as at Seistan. The request was transmitted by the Telegraph Sertip to Meshed, with the result that he received orders not to allow the line to be taken through the Russian room, but sanctioning 20 tomans on account of repairs presumably for the new room. So far the 'tape instrument' has not arrived, and no attempt has been made to put a separate room for the Russians in order."

In his next weekly summary Major Kennion writes:—

"The Telegraph Sertip at Birjand has sent a telegram to Serdar Mansur, in which he states that the room wanted for the Russian telegraphist, for the repairs of which 20 tomans had been sanctioned, was a different room from that used by the Persian signaller. He goes on to explain that the owner of the house, the lease of which had expired, now wishes to raise the rent from 2 tomans to 5 tomans per mensem. The Sertip asked sanction to rent the building for 3 tomans per mensem and to carry out the repairs after the lease had been signed.

"It may be noted that all the telegraph offices on the Seistan-Khaf line are rented from private individuals, except those at Seistan, Bandan, and Shusp."

The incident is now considered as closed, but I quote the above extracts as, although I do not doubt the good faith of the Russian Minister, he may have been misinformed by his Consul, who, being ignorant of the proposed exchange, may well have wished to gain credit for zeal.

I have, &c.
(Signed) CHARLES M. MARLING.

[15984]

No. 160.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received May 11.)(No. 87.)
Sir,*Tehran, April 20, 1908.*

I HAVE recently received a telegram from Captain Lorimer to the effect that the Bakhtiari Khans have paid compensation for a case of opium, the property of Messrs. Lynch, robbed in 1906, and also the bill of 4,477 krans for the repairs to the bridges on the Ahwaz-Ispahan road in 1907 (see my despatch No. 246 of the 7th November, 1907, last paragraph). The Khans promise a speedy settlement of other claims, with the exception of the bridge repairs bill for 1904, for which they offer 400 tomans. Captain Lorimer has, however, declined to reopen the discussion of this question.

Captain Lorimer's experience has shown that the Khans will eventually pay, if pressed, any claim which they have once accepted in principle, and, seen in this light, the information which I now have the honour to communicate to you appears to me to be eminently satisfactory.

I am expressing my cordial thanks to Captain Lorimer for the results achieved by his patient and persistent efforts, and my approval of his attitude in regard to the 1904 bridge bill.

I have, &c.
(Signed) CHARLES M. MARLING.

[15985]

No. 161.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received May 11.)(No. 88.)
Sir,*Tehran, April 21, 1908.*

WITH reference to my telegram No. 102 of the 16th instant, I have the honour to inform you that I have since received a further note from the Persian Government denying the right of this Legation to protect the firm of Hajji Ali Akbar and Sons. I have replied quoting the Minister for Foreign Affairs' own words in the above-mentioned note, which prove the contentions of this Legation, and I have added that, in view of the full instructions received on this subject from my Government (see Foreign Office despatch No. 7, Treaty, of the 22nd August, 1906), this Legation will continue to use its best endeavours on behalf of the firm when British interests are involved.

I trust that this note will close a troublesome correspondence, with the details of which I have not thought it worth while to trouble you, inasmuch as the Legation's attitude and arguments have been in conformity with the instructions sent by the Foreign Office in the despatch to which I have referred.

I mention this attitude of the Persian Government, however, as it is illustrative of the complications that might be expected to ensue if Hajji Ali Akbar be allowed to obtain from the Persian Government the Concession on Sirri Island, at which he is reported by Major Cox to be aiming.

I have, &c.
(Signed) CHARLES M. MARLING.

[1580]

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[15987]

No. 162.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received May 11.)

(No. 90.)

Sir,

Tehran, April 23, 1908.

THE conversation which I had with M. Ostrogradsky, the Russian Financial Agent, on the evening of the 20th instant has, I think, placed us in complete possession of the facts regarding the Russian claim to attach the Kermanshah customs, over which, as you will have gathered from my telegrams Nos. 106, 107, 108, and 110, M. de Hartwig and I had been playing at cross purposes for a week previously. It would, I think, be tedious and unprofitable for me to give a detailed account of our misunderstandings, which arose from two circumstances, viz., (1) that I was unaware, nor can I find that the fact has ever come to the knowledge of His Majesty's Legation, that the debts of the Persian Government to the Russian Bank are secured on the customs affected to the service of the regular Russian loans of 1900 and 1902; and (2) M. de Hartwig makes no distinction between the two forms of debt, but calls them both Government loans, whereas M. Ostrogradsky agrees with my view that the former (which are in krans) should be considered rather as advances on current account.

As regards the circumstances which led the Russian Minister to wish to make good Russia's claim on the Kermanshah customs, M. Ostrogradsky gave me the following account: Until recently the service of the Russian loans (the rouble loans of 1900 and 1902, as well as the Russian Bank's kran loans of 1901, 1904, and 1905) had been easily covered by the receipts of the more important custom-houses in the north and on the Caspian Sea, but lately these had shown a serious falling off, and the Russian Legation had been obliged to arrange for the encashment of the revenues of the other and smaller customs in those districts; but the tendency towards falling off was continuing, and it was now desired, in order to make the service of the Russian Bank's advances absolutely secure, to get possession of the Kermanshah revenues, which, though forming part of the security assigned to Russia, had for the past two years and more been affected to the Imperial Bank of Persia. So far, however, there has not been any actual deficiency, and so long as none was threatened the Russian Legation had no particular object in disturbing the privileged position of the Imperial Bank of Persia at Kermanshah; but the change of circumstances had made it incumbent on Russia to make good her lien on the customs at that place. The amount required to make good any future deficit would not, in all probability, be large, and he, M. Ostrogradsky, was quite ready to make some arrangement with the Imperial Bank for a division of the receipts. He added that it had been quite decided to open a branch of the Russian Bank at Kermanshah into which the customs receipts would have to be paid.

I told M. Ostrogradsky that in these circumstances the Imperial Bank could not, I thought, dispute the superiority of the Russian claim, and asked him if he would talk the question over with M. Rabino and see what arrangement could be made. M. Ostrogradsky did not anticipate that the Persian Government would raise any difficulties.

M. Ostrogradsky mentioned incidentally that nearly the whole of the advance to be made by M. Leanozoff on the Caspian Sea fisheries royalties for 1911 and payable on the 28th instant had been encashed by the Persian Government early in March.

As regards the bank's interest in this question, it would seem possible that, if, as M. Ostrogradsky says, the amount required to complete the service of the Russian loans is small, the surplus of the Kermanshah customs may suffice to pay the interest on the Imperial Bank of Persia's advances. But this, again, will depend on whether M. Ostrogradsky will consent to surrender the whole of that surplus; it must also be remembered that when the customs receipts are paid into the Russian Bank that establishment will have considerable powers of attaching them for other purposes than merely that of paying the interest due on the Russian loans. Such action is, I am told, quite illegal in other countries, but here it is a well-recognized practice, and its exercise by the Russian Bank might be detrimental to the Imperial Bank's interests. Still, until Mr. Rabino and M. Ostrogradsky have discussed the situation with a view to settling on a partition of the Kermanshah receipts, it seems premature to approach the Persian Government with a request to transfer the Imperial Bank's lien from Kermanshah to Bushire. Bushire, I may here say, is the only Gulf port suitable for the purpose, because at present the revenues of the other ports pass through it for transmission to Tehran, and because the only branch of the Imperial Bank of Persia in the Gulf is there.

It is in any case unlikely that the Persian Government will be willing to give

the Imperial Bank of Persia a lien on Bushire of a more binding character than that which the bank now enjoys at Kermanshah. The latter was the result of a verbal arrangement first made rather more than two years ago with M. Naus, by which one-half of the Kermanshah customs receipts were affected to the bank, and last year the arrangement was extended to include the whole receipts, or at least such part as would cover the services of the bank's advances. The agreement has on the whole been well kept, probably in some measure because the Persian Government have not had the same means as at Bushire for remitting moneys to the capital by means of native bankers. It is not impossible that the Imperial Bank of Persia by its own influence could obtain a similar verbal agreement, but, while such an arrangement would no doubt morally strengthen our political hold over the Gulf customs, it would certainly be better if possible to obtain a more formal engagement. Possibly even this might not be beyond the power of the bank, but it is to be feared, to judge from his present attitude, that the Manager of the bank, whose resignation has just been accepted by the Board in London, may not show the same zeal in the bank's interests as heretofore. Should the Legation have to take action, the mere fact of official intervention would make Persian Ministers very reluctant to take any action without the sanction of the Assembly, whose extraordinary proneness to detect hostile intentions in every proposal put forward by a foreign Legation would be a formidable obstacle to success. I venture to suggest, therefore, that, until the bank desires me to take action, it would be better not to raise the question officially. M. Bizot, moreover, appears to be rapidly acquiring influence with the Persian Government, and when his authority is more firmly established it will probably be easier to effect some arrangement which will secure, not only the bank's interests, but also the political objects we have in view with less friction than by the immediate intervention of the Legation.

I have, &c.

(Signed) CHARLES M. MARLING.

[15988]

No. 163.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received May 11.)

(No. 91.)

Sir,

Tehran, April 23, 1908.

IN a conversation which I had with M. de Hartwig on the 13th instant I mentioned to him that you had suggested to the Russian Government that, in order to prevent any third Power from obtaining a right to intervene in Persian financial matters, he and I should make a joint communication to the Persian Government to the effect that, in the event of that Government desiring to place any further charge on the customs revenues, the Governments of Great Britain and Russia would expect, in view of their interest in those revenues, to be consulted in the matter.

M. de Hartwig said that it would not be easy for him to make such a communication. He could not very well make the subvention to the German school a pretext for such a *démarche*, as he had received assurances from Mushir-ed-Dowleh that the subsidy would not be paid from the customs, or, if it was, that the sum would be deducted from the Shah's Civil List, which is payable from the customs; moreover, he was quite convinced that the Assembly would never permit a payment to be made from public funds except with its explicit consent. Then, again, should he make such a declaration, it would be open to the Persian Government to reply that Russia's interest in the customs was perfectly safe, inasmuch as he, the Minister, had already laid his hands on every custom-house pledged to secure the service of Russian loans. I said that I quite saw his position, and that personally I was rather inclined to agree with his views as to taking the German school subvention as the text of the proposed communication. Like himself, I thought there was but little danger of the subsidy being taken from the customs if the Assembly could prevent it; but, on the other hand, the Shah would scarcely submit to be tricked out of 12,000 tomans, and it was not impossible that, under pressure from the German Legation, the money would be paid somehow. The Germans could then claim that it came from the customs, and with the statement in Mushir-ed-Dowleh's note promising the subvention, and that it would be secured on the customs, they would have a pretty good case.

His other objection was, however, unanswerable, for, as Russia was in a position to collect all the revenues assigned to her, she had no special cause for prohibiting the Persian Government from disposing of any surplus that remained, after Russian wants had been satisfied, in any way they thought fit. I said that His Majesty's Government

were not in the same fortunate position, and I thought that the joint Declaration would produce a salutary effect. M. de Hartwig rejoined that another objection to joint action was that the two Powers had not got the customs as a whole pledged to them jointly, though between them they held a lien on the customs revenues of the whole Empire, and this seemed to him to make a joint *démarche* somewhat illogical. However, as I pressed the point, he said he would not refuse to make a joint verbal representation should his Government agree to the proposal.

I venture to think that M. de Hartwig's arguments contained a good deal of force. Under her Loan Agreements Russia is empowered, in case the interest falls into arrear, to herself collect the customs receipts assigned for the service of her loans, and the security she possesses is thus so absolute that she cannot well pretend to be anxious about it. Our position, however, is quite different, inasmuch as we are not entitled to encash the revenues of the customs assigned to us, and the effect is seen in the fact that the interest on the Anglo-Indian Loan of 1903-4 for 1905-6 was paid eleven months in arrear, and that for 1906-7, due on the 4th instant, is again overdue, while the sinking fund for both periods also remains unpaid. This very fact, combined with the failure of the Persian Government to give a reply to us respecting the condition we attach to the suspension of the sinking fund, seems, however, to me to offer the opportunity for making our position secure against the possibility of the Persian Government admitting the interference of a third Power in Persian financial matters by giving a lien on the customs of the south. I therefore ventured to suggest in my telegram No. 86 of the 31st March that I should be authorized to send in a note to the Persian Government stating that in the above-mentioned circumstances no discussion of the conditions attached to our assent to the suspension of the sinking fund will be admitted by His Majesty's Government.

It appears to me that by making a communication in this sense we shall be in a position at least as strong as that of Russia, and that we have more grounds for making it, for, although, like ourselves, Russia has received no reply as to the suspension of the sinking fund, nor any payment on that account, she was, if she so desired, always in a position to attach the sums due on capital account, which we were not, unless we had withheld the payments due by the Indo-European Telegraph Department, a step which I would strongly deprecate as endangering the renewal of the Telegraph Concessions.

There is not, so far as I am able to see, the smallest probability that the Persian Government will be able to make any payments to us in the immediate future. Almost the whole of the anticipated royalties for 1911 from the Caspian Sea fisheries have already been paid over to the Persian Government, and no doubt are already expended, and only a very small balance—less, M. Ostrogradsky informs me, than 6,000l.—remains. The revenues from the customs are appropriated ten times over, and, except from Khorasan and Seistan, scarcely anything is coming in on account of internal taxation.

The need for sending in the communication which I have ventured to urge on your consideration is therefore not pressing, unless, indeed, I should receive a reply on the subject of the suspension of the sinking fund, of which I should of course apprise you by telegraph.

I have, &c.
(Signed) CHARLES M. MARLING.

[15989]

No. 164.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received May 11.)

(No. 92.)

Sir,

Tehran, April 23, 1908.

EXPERIENCE in the East has taught me that, when a foreign Legation conveys to the Government of the country its satisfaction at the conduct of any particular official, such action frequently brings the individual whom it is meant to serve under suspicion of being too friendly with foreigners and may prove a disservice to him.

This reflection occurred to me when I received your telegram No. 73 of the 2nd ultimo, instructing me to convey the thanks of His Majesty's Government to the Persian Government for the helpful conduct of the Khan of Bander Rig in the capture of the pirates of Dayyir, and I therefore telegraphed to His Majesty's Consul-General at Bushire inquiring his views on the matter. From Major Cox's reply it appears

that the Khan is not very desirous that a recommendation in his favour should be made to the Persian Government, but would prefer to be allowed to hope that he can count on our good offices in case he should need them in the future.

In these circumstances I think that the matter may be left there.

I have, &c.
(Signed) CHARLES M. MARLING.

[15990]

No. 165.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received May 11.)

(No. 93.)

Sir,

Tehran, April 23, 1908.

IN anticipation of receiving your authority to make an attempt, as suggested in my despatch No. 267 of the 6th December, 1907, to obtain control of the Ahwaz-Borasjun telegraph wire, I have on several occasions during the winter, when the line was broken down, urged on the Minister for Foreign Affairs the necessity of putting it in proper order. His Excellency, as usual, was lavish of promises, and even went so far on one occasion as to say that he had requested the Persian Telegraph Administration, if unable to take the necessary measures itself, to consult the Director of the Indo-European Telegraph Department on the subject. Mr. Barker, however, heard nothing about the matter from the Persians, and as I had seen from the Confidential print that the matter was still under discussion in London I did not feel justified in pushing the matter further.

With the return of fine weather the line will probably be kept in some sort of working order, and no reasonable opportunity for again opening the question on the score of the bad condition of the line is likely to arise. In these circumstances I propose, for the present, to make no further move, except under your instructions.

I have, &c.
(Signed) CHARLES M. MARLING.

[15992]

No. 166.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received May 11.)

(No. 95.)

Sir,

Tehran, April 23, 1908.

THE incapacity of the Persian Government to maintain any semblance of authority over the tribes in Northern Azerbaijan is likely to involve them in a disagreeable dispute with Russia.

For months past the Russian Legation has been urging the Persian Government to remove a number of Persian tribesmen who had settled down and taken possession of the tongue of Russian territory, about the latitude of Lenkoran, which projects some little distance westwards beyond the general direction of the frontier. Across the base of this tongue runs a track which, with the permission of Russia, was much used by Persian tribes passing north and south, who, taking advantage of the complaisance of Russia, by degrees began to settle on the adjacent land, while the Persian local authorities even posted pickets at either end of the track. The Persian Government, as usual, did nothing in reply to M. de Hartwig's protests, who was at last obliged to inform them that Russia would take her own means to safeguard her frontier. Accordingly, a small force was sent by the Viceroy of the Caucasus to patrol the whole frontier in these regions, and some days ago a small party, under the command of a Captain, was attacked by Persians of the Shahseven tribe on Russian territory near Balasevar. The Captain and one private were killed, and two or three other Russians wounded.

In reply to M. de Hartwig's demand for reparation and the punishment of the offenders, the Persian Government have promised to send troops which are to be collected from the tribes near Tabreez and Ardebil. The Russian Minister, conscious that great delay must ensue before any force can be got together, is extremely dissatisfied, and will probably advise his Government to take measures themselves.

[1580]

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The whole of these districts appear to be in a lamentable condition, and reports have reached Tehran that Ardebil itself has been attacked and partly plundered by marauding tribesmen.

I have, &c.
(Signed) CHARLES M. MARLING.

[15993]

No. 167.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received May 11.)

(No. 96.)

Sir,

Tehran, April 23, 1908.

I HAVE the honour to transmit herewith the usual monthly summary of events in Persia for the last four weeks, in which a brief account of the proceedings of the Persian National Assembly has been embodied.

I have, &c.
(Signed) CHARLES M. MARLING.

Inclosure in No. 167.

No. 4.—*Monthly Summary of Events in Persia.*

The National Assembly.

THE presidency of the Assembly, to which Mukhber-ul-Mulk was elected after the forced resignation of Ehtesham-es-Sultaneh, was not accepted by the former, and Montaz-ed-Dowleh was elected to the presidency on the 4th April. The new President is a brother of the Persian Minister in Paris, and was Private Secretary to the Ain-ed-Dowleh while that Prince was Prime Minister during 1904 and 1905. He speaks French very well and was for some time in the Foreign Office. His election was decided upon by the predominant Tabreezi party in the Assembly in order to be assured of a President who would not show that independence which made the Ehtesham-es-Sultaneh so unpopular. It was even suggested by Taki Zadeh that a new President should be elected every three months, but the motion was not pushed to a division.

On the 7th April, two Russian subjects and four others of Persian nationality, were arbitrarily arrested at their homes by the Chief of Police, in pursuance of the orders of Amir Moazzam (Governor of Tehran), for alleged complicity in the bomb outrage of the 28th February. Considerable excitement immediately ensued in consequence of a movement on the part of the Enjumen in protest against what they considered a violation of the Constitution of the 8th October, 1907, providing inviolability of domicile and for arrests by warrant. (See Mr. Marling's despatch No. 242 of the 7th November, 1907, Articles 9, 10, and 13 of Constitution). A large number of members of the numerous Enjumen crowded to the Assembly and Courts of Justice demanding the trial of the Governor of Tehran and the Chief of Police. Matters came to a head on the 12th April, when the Shah refused to allow the Governor to be tried. The Prime Minister was, at the same time, severely censured by the Shah for allowing things to come to such a pass, and the whole Cabinet thereupon resigned. It was eventually agreed that the two offending officials should be tried at the Ministry of War in the presence of the Cabinet Ministers, who in the meantime had withdrawn their resignations, representatives of the Assembly and the Enjumen. In support of the Governor's action a document was produced purporting to have been addressed by Ehtesham-es-Sultaneh in November last to the Ministry of that day saying that the Assembly had unanimously decided that, until such time as laws had been drawn up and passed, "the régime formerly in vogue" should continue to be observed by the Government. This paper, of which the existence is said to have been unknown to the Assembly, gave rise to much discussion. The Governor and Chief of Police were, eventually, found guilty of violating the Constitution, which both admitted not having read, and a nominal sentence was passed upon them. During the trial it was shown that the Governor of Tehran had acted on the Shah's orders, and it is quite evident to the public that the Shah wished to see how far he could press the Popular party, under the impression, no doubt, that it had been weakened by the Ehtesham-es-Sultaneh's policy. The result has, however, shown that the Popular party is as strong as ever.

On Tuesday, the 21st April, the whole Cabinet attended at the House to be interpellated on the following subjects of public interest:—

Incident on the Russian frontier at Balasovar.
Henjam-Bundar Abbas telegraph line.
Brutal executions at Kermanshah.
Appointment of Serdar Afkham as Governor of Kurdistan.
Enforcing of laws passed by the Assembly.
Mint contracts, and proposed farming of mint.

The Cabinet Ministers were subjected to a searching cross-examination by Taki Zadeh, Assadullah Mirza, and other prominent Deputies. The proceedings, which were watched from the strangers' room by Mr. Churchill, were conducted throughout with remarkable regularity, and all the Ministers who replied to interpellations displayed a marked sense of responsibility to the House, while the Deputies all agreed that undue interference in their discretionary powers was to be strongly deprecated.

General News.

Ehtesham-es-Sultaneh left suddenly for Europe on the 3rd April.

The trial of the persons accused of the murder of the Parsee merchant, Erbab Fereidoon, has been going on for some time at the Courts of Justice. The proceedings are public, and are reported fully in a special newspaper called the "Mohakamat." Some of the prisoners have confessed their guilt, and it is quite clear that their object was common robbery, and not in any way political as was at first surmised. The chief priests will eventually be asked to deliver judgment.

The Zil-es-Sultan, after remaining about a fortnight at Ispahan, is now proceeding leisurely to Shiraz.

M. Priem has at last left Tehran for Europe.

The two Russian subjects who were arrested on a charge of alleged complicity in the bomb outrage have been set at liberty. The trial of the remaining persons under arrest is in progress, but so far the charge has not been brought home to them.

Prince Farman Farma has resigned the Governorship of Azerbaijan, and is now on his way to Tehran. The Minister of Education, Mukhber-es-Sultaneh, was at first designated to succeed him, but has not finally accepted the post.

The Cabinet remains the same as reported in last summary.

(Signed) G. P. CHURCHILL,
Oriental Secretary.

Tehran, April 22, 1908.

Tabreez.

During March Tabreez and its immediate surroundings remained quiet. In the town itself the new Chief of Police, a leading member of the Local Assembly, has raised a very smart-looking body of policemen, who are dressed in uniform, and each carries a rifle and fifty cartridges. The streets are patrolled by them day and night. Government allows 3,600 toman for their expenses.

The Ardebil district was in March in a disturbed condition. The Shahseven tribes were pillaging the villages, and a party of them raided Ardebil, where they robbed some fifty houses, killing some of the inmates. The Governor, Rashid-ul-Mulk, fled to Tabreez.

Reports from the north-east corner of Azerbaijan state that a conflict has occurred between Persian tribesmen and Russian troops. A Russian officer and some men are reported to have been killed, and the custom-house at Balasovar is reported to have been burnt by the Russians. Accounts are, however, conflicting as to the actual facts. The Foreign Minister was interpellated on the subject on the 21st instant by the Assembly, and asked them to await the result of further inquiries.

Kum.

A demonstration has been made by the people of Kum against the levy of tolls by Messrs. Lynch on the Kum-Sultanabad road, and they actually wrecked a toll-house outside Kum. His Majesty's Legation has communicated on the subject with Seyed

Abdullah Mujtehed, who sent strongly-worded telegrams to the clergy of Kum deprecating their action, and pointing out that Messrs. Lynch were acting in strict accord with an Arrangement concluded with the Central Government.

Resht.

Zahir-ed-Dowleh, the new Governor-General of Ghilan, arrived at Resht on the 16th March. He informed the members of the Local Assembly that he was there to maintain order, and that they were subject to the law as well as other people. A few days later he visited Enzeli, where he appointed his son Governor. Thence he went to Talish to try and reconcile the inhabitants of that place to their Khan and to collect arrears of revenue.

Astrabad.

The Governor has been displaying great energy, and appears to have effectively quieted the Turcoman tribes. A photograph has reached Tehran of about seventy irregular horsemen, each with the head a Turcoman at the end of his lance.

Meshed.

1. Meshed continues quiet, but in the province murders appears to be on the increase.

2. In the second week in April the Local Assembly was the scene of a serious riot. At the alleged instigation of some of its members, the soldiers, who had appealed against the robbery of their pay, beat a popular reformer. It appears that this individual was urging a fresh election on more popular lines, but the present members wished to be re-elected in a body. Trouble is said to be likely to result from this circumstance.

Turbat-i-Hayderi.

1. Captain Iyass has sent six of his Cossacks and one non-commissioned officer back to Russia for insubordination.

2. The district is still without a Governor but is quiet.

3. From Karez it is reported that, as the National Assembly has decided that the sowers of the sanitary cordon postal line should be paid by Russia, three of the posts have been abolished.

Ispahan.

1. The Zil-es-Sultan, who arrived at Ispahan *en route* to Shiraz on the 24th March, having remained there longer than twenty-four hours, a demonstration hostile to him took place. The demonstrators were attacked by soldiers and others and some looting took place. The Zil eventually left Ispahan for Shiraz on the 18th April.

2. His Majesty's Acting Consul-General reports that while at Ispahan the Zil received the visits of nearly all the persons who were responsible for his dismissal last year from Ispahan, including Agha Nejefi. The Zil remarked to some friends that he had spent about 7,000*l.* in his preparation to go to Shiraz but would now be glad to give 2,000*l.* not to go.

Seistan.

1. It is noteworthy that caravans plying between Herat and Quetta show a disposition to use the Nushki route instead of the direct one. The reasons given for avoiding the Afghan route are danger from robbers and the internal transit dues levied in Afghanistan.

2. Dr. Kosminsky's interpreter has been holding "rozeh khanis" at Birjand which have been attended by the Neib Karguzar and about 100 others.

3. The Shaikat-ul-Mulk asked Mr. Howson to transmit telegrams for him to Tehran. He intimated at the same time that the Heshmet-ul-Mulk was intriguing again for the governorship. Major Kennion told Mr. Howson to transmit telegrams should the Shaikat wish to send any.

Kerman.

Kerman still has no Governor and the opposing factions send conflicting telegrams to Tehran in the hope of getting some one they approve of appointed.

Kermanshah.

1. His Majesty's Consul returned to Kermanshah from Kasr-i-Shirin on the 21st March.

2. A report having reached Tehran that the Deputy Governor of Kermanshah had been responsible for some brutal executions without proper trial, the Minister of the Interior was interpellated on the subject on the 21st instant. He replied that as soon as the news reached him he had ordered the Deputy Governor to come to Tehran to be tried.

Kurdistan.

Sakat-ul-Mulk, the Governor, having resigned, the Minister of the Interior appointed Serdar Afkham to succeed him. The appointment is, however, very unpopular as he is suspected of strong Reactionary tendencies.

Shiraz.

1. Since the middle of March Shiraz has been abnormally quiet. Many prominent individuals have received threatening letters, but no act of violence is reported. Though the bazaars are open, trade remains at a standstill. The news of the appointment of the Zil-es-Sultan as Governor-General of Fars was well received by almost all sections.

2. On the Bushire road three robberies occurred during March, and the road guards were reported to be extorting money from travellers. On the Ispahan road one robbery occurred between Shiraz and Zergun.

3. Mr. Bill, who will officiate at Shiraz after Mr. Grahame's departure, arrived at Shiraz on the 18th April.

PERSIAN GULF.

Bushire.

1. Muleteers have again begun to use the Shif route to the north. This is said to be due to the excessive rates for forage, &c., charged by the Khan of Chakuta. The latter, not wishing to lose his income, tried to forcibly prevent muleteers using the Shif route. This led to a scuffle with the men of Ahmed Khan Angali, who profits by the levy of illegal tolls when the Shif route is used. Representations are being made by the Legation on the subject.

2. Captain M. F. White, I.M.S., arrived on the 4th March, and assumed charge of his duties as Mobile Assistant to the Chief Quarantine Officer.

3. On the 27th March the Deputy-Governor showed the Residency Munshi a telegram from the Accountant in charge of the revenue accounts at Tehran to the effect that the governorship of the Gulf ports, including Charbar, Shib Kuh, and Dilem, for the next year, had been intrusted to the Darya Beggi.

4. Considerable feeling was aroused in the Armenian community by the action of the German Consul in causing the Deputy-Governor to have an Armenian Customs clerk severely beaten on what seemed to be rather insufficient grounds.

Bunder Abbas.

1. Hajji Mirza Abdul Mohammed, editor of the Cairo "Chehra Nema," arrived from Lingah on the 2nd March. He delivered an address to the Local Assembly on educational matters.

2. The caravan routes were again disturbed during the latter half of February, and the loads of two donkeys belonging to the relieved Consular escort from Kerman were robbed near Baghu. His Majesty's Consul was taking steps to recover the stolen property.

Lingah.

The quarantine doctor at Lingah reports that on the 22nd February the Russian Consular Agent boarded the Odessa Company's steam-ship "Euphrates" before the doctor had completed his examination, in spite of the protest of the quarantine ferrash. The Residency Surgeon, as Chief Quarantine Authority, has addressed the Russian Consul at Bunder Abbas on the subject.

Mohammerah.

1. M. Leleux, Inspector-General of Customs, has expressed the intention of putting in force the Articles of the "Règlement légal" not previously in force here; he stated he would make concessions to facilitate trade. The Sheikh has warned him that changes are dangerous and that he (the Sheikh) is head of the Customs.

2. Herr Kurt Jung, German Commercial Delegate, visited Mohammerah in the last week of March. He left later for Bussorah.

3. A Turkish corvette has visited Feilieh. This is reported upon fully in a separate despatch.

(Signed) C. B. STOKES, Major,
Military Attache.

[15994]

No. 168.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received May 11.)

(No. 97.)

Sir,

Tehran, April 23, 1908.

I HAVE the honour to transmit herewith copy of a despatch and its inclosures addressed to the Government of India by His Majesty's Resident in the Persian Gulf respecting the wishes of the Sheikh of Mohammerah and the Bakhtiari Khans for nearer relations with us.

It would seem from these papers that both Sardar Arfa and the Khans have been led to make advances to us from similar motives, viz., apprehension that their present position of semi-independence may be threatened; either from within by the change in the form of Government in Persia; or from without by direct aggression on the part of the Turks. As regards the former cause it seems to me probable that these Chiefs have been unduly impressed with the blatant talk of the Tehran press, which is given to discussing, in what, considering the hopeless impotence of the Central Government, are ludicrously confident terms, what the sovereign Assembly of Persia will do. What seems to excite most apprehension is the prospect that the struggle between the Shah and the reform party will end in the triumph of the latter. That such will be the issue is, I think, the opinion of most competent observers, but considering the inaptitude which the Assembly has hitherto shown for representative Government there seems to be little prospect that any Administration is likely to be found in Persia, for many years to come, strong enough to attempt to attack the present position of the semi-independent tributary tribes. On the contrary, it appears to me more than probable that the task of governing those parts of Persia, nominally directly administered from Tehran, will so tax the energies of the Ministers that they will be only too glad not to have to interfere wherever there is a local authority capable of maintaining a reasonable degree of order. In these circumstances I am inclined to think that the Sheikh of Mohammerah may consider his position as fairly well assured for a good many years to come without any special guarantees from us, and it is for the Bakhtiaris to secure themselves in like manner by putting their house in order and giving no pretext for attempted interference in their affairs from Tehran.

In any case, I presume, that we can scarcely make any reply such as would encourage the Bakhtiari Khans and Sheikh Khazal to believe that we favour any agreement between them aimed at their eventual independence. Such a step would scarcely be in accordance with the spirit of our recent undertaking to respect the integrity of Persia.

As regards the second point, i.e., the apprehension of attack from the Turks, I understand from your despatch No. 21 of the 25th February last, that His Majesty's Government consider our interests in South-Western Persia are of sufficient importance to warrant us in taking steps to prevent any serious disturbance of the *status quo*, and I venture to think that some general assurances of this nature would suffice to allay local apprehension. Such assurances could not be resented by the Persian Government, nor do I believe that Russia, to judge from her present attitude, would take any exception to them.

They would also, it seems to me, be sufficient to banish Sheikh Khazal's temptation to look towards the Germans rather than to ourselves; a contingency which Major Cox appears to think not impossible.

In conclusion I would venture the opinion that Sheikh Khazal is very much mistaken in his estimate of the power of the Russian Legation at Tehran at present. In

the press it has little influence; otherwise it would not be so constantly the object of attack; nor do I see any reason why it should use any influence it may have to inspire attacks against Sheikh Khazal.

I have, &c.
(Signed) CHARLES M. MARLING.

Inclosure 1 in No. 168.

Major Cox to Mr. Marling.

(No. 44.)

Sir,

Bushire, March 22, 1908.

I HAVE the honour to forward, for your information, a copy of the letter which I have addressed to the Government of India regarding the aspirations of the Bakhtiari Khans and the Sheikh of Mohammerah in the direction of closer relations with us.

I have, &c.
(Signed) P. Z. COX, Major, British Resident in
the Persian Gulf, and His Britannic
Majesty's Consul-General for Fars, &c.

Inclosure 2 in No. 168.

Major Cox to Government of India.

Sir,

Bushire, March 22, 1908.

I HAVE the honour to forward for information and such consideration as may be possible, copies of the undermentioned papers:—

(1.) A Memorandum giving details of an interview between myself, accompanied by Mr. Consul McDouall, and Sheikh Khazal, of Mohammerah, on the 7th January last.

(2.) A letter dated the 3rd February last, received from His Britannic Majesty's Vice-Consul, Ahwaz, in which the latter reports the purport of a conversation which he recently had with the Bakhtiari Khans Salar-i-Arfa and Shahab-es-Sultaneh.

The Sheikh of Mohammerah asked me to await receipt of the Memorandum of State expenditure which he was preparing, before taking special action on his representations, and when the summary of the said document reached Bushire I was away on tour; meanwhile Captain Lorimer's Report also reached me.

2. In connection with the above mentioned papers I beg to refer to, and to quote for facility of reference, a Memorandum recorded by Sir Louis Dane at the time of the tour made by his Excellency Lord Curzon and Sir Arthur Hardinge to the Persian Gulf in the winter of 1903. The passage I refer to runs as follows (*vide* inclosure to Foreign Department letter, dated the 1st March, 1904):—

"The question of increasing our influence in the Lur and Bakhtiari country . . . and of strengthening the tribes in South-western Persia, so as to enable them to hold their own in the event of a collapse of the central power or trouble in South-western Persia was discussed on several occasions by his Excellency with Sir Arthur Hardinge. . . . It was recognized that our future action in South-western Persia must largely depend on the extent to which we could strengthen and utilize both tribes and the tribes of Arabistan, who under the Sheikh of Mohammerah are in much the same position."

3. It will be seen from my present inclosures that practically simultaneously, though independently, the Chiefs of the Bakhtiaris and of the Arab tribes of Arabistan respectively have become apprehensive as to their future and convinced that their interests lie in union among themselves, if possible under our ægis.

The Sheikh of Mohammerah, encouraged no doubt by the understanding at which his *fidus Achates* Sheikh Mubarek has arrived at with us, presses for an assurance that his lineal heirs will be maintained in the enjoyment of their present patrimony, and will be reasonably safeguarded against the curtailment of their present semi-independent position and powers by the Central Government. As arguments in support of his rights or strong claims to such treatment Sheikh Khazal adduces the fact that ever since his accession the Central Government have obliged him to meet from private funds very heavy expenditure which should properly have fallen on the Government Exchequer, and

that now during the current Turco-Persian crisis the Central Government have left him absolutely to take care of himself in the best way he can, in fact, have neither the means nor the power to do anything to help him in the event of his territory being invaded by Turkish troops. In this respect he is in a measure comforted by his confidence in Great Britain to prevent any attack upon him by sea, but in the event of an invasion from the land side he feels that he would be placed in a very serious position, seeing that he possesses no artillery or large supply of ammunition.

In return for such assurances from us as his heart desires he expresses his readiness to bind himself to us in any way which may seem to us feasible.

The Bakhtiariis intimate that, prompted by the common sentiments of self-preservation, they contemplate allying themselves with the Sheikh of Mohammerah, and in the hope of thus maintaining a position of semi or practical independence they are anxious to enter into a secret understanding with the British Government.

I do not feel that I can safely or usefully offer much comment upon their respective representations, as in such a question my field of vision is too confined to allow me to see the matter in the right perspective. I can only say as a local officer that it seems to me that having by the terms of our Convention with Russia left the region affected in the neutral zone and exposed to German enterprise, it is of the utmost importance to our interests to counteract the disadvantages of that circumstance as far as possible and without delay by strengthening our hold as much as we can upon the Chiefs of South-western Persia before the opportunity to do so passes out of our control.

As far as the Sheikh of Mohammerah is concerned I believe him to be primarily quite sincere in his protestations that his interests and hopes are centred in us. Nevertheless he is mainly prompted by the dictates of self-preservation, and should there be failure on our part to dispel his apprehensions, it is as well to remember that he is likely to be greatly influenced by his astute henchman and relative, Haji Rais-ut-Tujjar, who is possessed by no feelings of tradition or sentiment, or by any considerations other than those of personal aggrandizement and present profit, and would, I doubt not, as lief pursue his schemes through German auspices as ours if the former were made sufficiently attractive to him and ours were too lukewarm.

Whether the aspirations of the Sheikh and the Khans can be entertained to any degree or not, I feel sure that the problem of which they are factors will have the early and interested consideration of the Government.

A duplicate of this letter is being forwarded to His Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires, Tehran, under my office letter of to-day's date.

I have, &c.

(Signed) P. Z. COX, Major, Political Resident in
the Persian Gulf.

Inclosure 3 in No. 168.

MEMORANDUM by Major Cox regarding an interview which took place between the Sheikh Khazal of Mohammerah and the Officiating Political Resident in the Persian Gulf, dated January 7th, 1908.

At my last visit to Mohammerah on the 16th December, 1907, in connection with the delivery to the Sheikh of the Humaidi pirates, Sheikh Khazal, who in the course of our discussion regarding the punishment of the outlaws, had incidentally shown that he heard of a recent agreement with Sheikh Mubarek, informed me as I was leaving that he had urgent grounds for wishing to discuss his affairs generally with me, and begged me to pay him a leisurely visit at an early date for the purpose. I did so on the 7th January, and having gone there for this express purpose, I took such previous papers as were necessary with me. Mr. McDouall was present with me. Sheikh Khazal having in the first instance led me to think that he needed more definite support or assurances from us, I read him out the purport of Sir Arthur Hardinge's letters of the 7th December, 1902, and the 24th December, 1903, and then inquired what further he needed. Sheikh Khazal replied that the assurances just referred to were all right so far as they went and at the epoch at which they were given, but that the outlook had much changed and developed since 1903, and that he could not but regard the near future with the greatest apprehension. It was the advent of the "Majlis" and the so-called constitutional Government which had changed the aspect of the future so much. One of two things must soon happen, either the Shah or the Majlis must be eliminated. If the probability

was that the Shah would be able to suppress the Majlis, as there was no doubt he would like to do, and if there was to be a return to absolute Government, then he would not be so apprehensive, for he was fortified by the assurance which we had given him to afford him our good offices and support with the Central Government, and, as long as he remained faithful to the Shah and followed our advice, to protect him against attack by water under any pretext. But it now appeared to him and his advisers, either that the Majlis would get the upper hand of the Shah and that the latter would become a mere puppet in their hands, or else that the Majlis would break up and that a general upheaval would supervene, which would prompt or oblige foreign Powers to interfere, and that a scramble would result. In either eventuality he felt that he would be in great jeopardy. We repeated to him the purport of a recent telegram to the effect that Russia and England had specifically undertaken to respect the integrity of Persia, and asked what he especially fears from the Majlis or from constitutional government. He replied that the Majlis and the now free press had always been hostile to him. The papers had been repeatedly attacking him lately for everything he did. Thus he had been attacked for the Beni Truf expedition and for his friendship with Sheikh Mubarek. He knew that the Russians, who were all-powerful in Tehran in the way of pulling strings, were hostile to him and fostered these attacks, and he believed that the first thing that the constitutional Government would do under the pretext of reform would be to attempt to clip his wings and to intrench further upon his hereditary and established rights. Something in that direction was bound to happen, and it was of vital importance to him to know in the event of (1) the break up of Persia, or (2) the attempt of the Majlis to reduce him to nothing, what the policy of His Majesty's Government would be, and how far they could reassure him now. He begged that we would consider the question of giving him a writing, assuring him (1) that we would to the utmost of our power prevent his absorption by any other Power, and that he and his children would be maintained in the enjoyment of their patrimony; (2) that just as we had hitherto undertaken to protect Mohammerah from attack by a foreign Power (whatever pretext for such action be alleged), and also that we would continue to give him our support and good offices so long as he remained faithful to the Shah and acted in accordance with our advice, similarly we would now extend that undertaking and promise him immunity against the inroads of the Majlis upon his powers. He expressed the conviction that his salvation lay in forming connections with one of the great European nations, and that among those nations his interests and ideas were identical with those of Great Britain and not with those of any other Power, and that in return for such fresh assurances as those indicated he was prepared to take upon himself obligations to the British Government in any terms that they might think advisable.

The Sheikh then went on to speak of the Turco-Persian question, complaining that although the Central Government sought to curtail his powers and independence, they left him, in an urgent matter like this, in the dark and in the lurch, and without special funds. (*Vide* Residency telegram dated 18th January, 1908.)

He enlarged on this fact, and went on to speak of the enormous extra expenditure that he had been put to by the Persian Government in connection with measures of government which should properly fall on the Government Exchequer. He begged leave to have prepared and to place before me, for the confidential information of Government, a statement of such expenditure which he had incurred. He concluded with the promise to have this drawn up as soon as possible, but it was not received by me until the end of February.

(Signed) P. Z. COX, Major, Political Resident in
the Persian Gulf.

Inclosure 4 in No. 168.

STATEMENT of the chief expenses of the Government of the Shatt-el-Arab and the Karun, from the accession of Sheikh Khazal Khan, 1315, to the end of 1325 Hijra (June 1897 to January 1908 inclusive), eleven years.

	Krans.	£
1. Expenses on the Shatt-el-Arab, including salaries of Sheikhs, guard-posts, patrols, bellams, cartridges, and a few rifles.	2,410,860	46,363
2. Expenses on Karun: Salary of Naib-el-Hukuma, at Ahwaz; salaries of Bawi Sheikhs and other Headmen, guard-posts on Karun and at Felahieh, sowars, cartridges, also steamer expenses when Sheikh Khazal is on the Karun.	4,842,815	93,131
3. Expenses in connection with Hawija and Beni Truf, including salaries of Sheikhs, two expeditions, compensation for horses killed, cartridges, and some rifles.	4,786,242	92,043
4. Expenses sending Hanzal with 300 sowars for two months in 1904 to preserve order at Dizful and Shushter pending arrival of Azam-es-Sultaneh.	32,000	615
5. Expenses in 1907 sending Hanzal with 500 sowars to assist Sardar Mukarrem in his expedition against Derekwand Lurs.	35,000	673
Telegrams for eleven years.	80,000	1,538
Total	12,186,917	234,363

Note by Mr. McDouall.

This does not include such expenses as entertaining Governor-General, which comes to about 50,000 krans a-year, according to Haji Rais, or expenses of band, or Haji Rais' two Missions to Tehran. In Haji Jabur's time the Sheikhs received no salaries. Sheikh Mizal gave a few small sums, but Sheikh Khazal instituted the present system, and called upon them to prevent robbery and piracy and keep the peace. Haji Rais now has the whole accounts made out in sections from the books kept by the Sheikh's clerk and himself, but says probably some items are omitted. This is a summary of the whole. Any special items could be obtained if you wished for them; but Haji Rais is leaving on a Mission to the Bakhtiari al Ab-i-bid in a few days. Expenses in connection with Behbahan Government are not given.

(Signed) W. McDOUALL.

Mohammerah, February 15, 1908.

Inclosure 5 in No. 168.

Vice-Consul Lorimer to Major Cox.

(No. 44.)

Sir,

Camp Wais, February 3, 1908.

I HAVE the honour to communicate a proposal propounded by the Salar Arfa' and Shahab-es-Sultaneh in their brief interview with me at Maidan Munaftun on the 23rd January.

2. On this occasion they made the startling announcement that, after due consideration, they found themselves so dissatisfied with the present state of the Persian Government that they were contemplating throwing off allegiance to it. They had entered into negotiations with Sheikh Khazal on the subject, and would have me understand that they had made some progress in them, and that the Sheikh had indicated that he shared their aspirations. It was proposed to have a personal meeting with him, in order to bring matters to a practical issue in the form of a Treaty or Convention, and for this purpose they intended shortly to pay a visit to Nasiri. There they would exchange written undertakings with the Sheikh, which they would ask me to guarantee. Their ambition was to attain the position of quasi independent Protectorates, of which they cited Muscat and Koweit as examples, and with this end in view they were prepared to accept our sovereignty, paying their revenues to us and putting their population at our disposal for military training. They recognized that their Agreements among themselves lacked stability, and they would look to us to enforce on both sides the observance of their Treaty with the Sheikh.

3. Previously, and in my absence, the Shahab had begged my mirza to gain my adherence to their project, and professed the Khans' willingness to furnish us with all signed Agreements. My mirza expressed himself doubtful of my attaching much weight to their signed undertakings, gently reminding the Shahab that the seal on the document which he had handed me at Kima last March was yet scarcely dry. This silenced the Shahab, who did not want the Salar's curiosity aroused regarding that episode in his past career.

4. In the course of the conversation the Salar remarked that they had some 40,000 subjects capable of bearing arms, but of these only some 10,000 were provided with fire-arms. This estimate, I may observe, is the most sane statement of the fighting strength of the Bakhtiari tribes which I have yet had made to me. The Salar also said that some British Representative (Colonel Douglas in 1904?) had approached them on the subject of raising and training forces in their country. At that time they were not prepared to favour such a step, but that their feelings had undergone a change, and that now they were anxious for it. Let us now play up to our proposals.

5. I answered very briefly that I was unable personally to make them any reply, but that I would lay their proposals before my Government. I also stated that their proposals appeared to me to involve issues of great magnitude, and of such a nature that our engagements with Persia and other Powers would make it very difficult for us to accept any part in them.

6. The short time at my command and my unwillingness to display too great interest in the subversive projects of the Khans, prevented me from attempting to draw from them a more detailed statement of the precise course of action they have in view, and of the means and methods which they propose to employ. I can therefore only communicate the above précis of what passed between us. This I do merely for the information of Government. I do not propose to offer any comments on a subject which stands to be judged on general and not local grounds; but I may remark that I question the probability of Sheikh Khazal's committing himself in the way desired by the Khans, though he may to gain fugitive objects, discuss the matter with them with apparent seriousness. I would also point out that, if rejected in their full scope, the avowed desires of the Khans might possibly still be taken advantage of in part, as a means of attaining the aims which Government held in 1904 as regards the raising of militia under our control among the Bakhtiaris and the tribes of Western Luristan.

7. In the event of the Khans carrying out their projected visit to Nasiri and meeting with the Sheikh, their proposals are likely to be presented to me in a more concrete and urgent form by themselves, and possibly by the Sheikh. I should wish to be furnished with instructions regarding the attitude which I should observe before such a contingency arises.

I have, &c.

(Signed) D. L. R. LORIMER, Captain.

[15995]

No. 169.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received May 11.)

(No. 98.)

Sir,

Tehran, April 23, 1908.

SINCE the receipt of your telegram No. 78 of the 11th instant I have been in constant communication with the Russian Minister as to the steps to be taken to broach the question of our control over the Meshed-Tehran and Khaf-Nasratabad telegraph lines to the Persian Government, and we are agreed that the least friction will be caused by leaving the matter entirely in the hands of the Superintendents of the two Telegraph Administrations, and confining ourselves to simply mentioning the arrangement to the Minister for Foreign Affairs as one in which the Legations take a very secondary, and certainly no political, interest.

Mr. Barker is disposed to think that by taking this line there is quite a reasonable chance that the Persian Telegraph Administration will see the matter in the way which we wish, and will raise no difficulty over it. M. de Hartwig and I are not so hopeful, but we are both agreed that the more aloof the Legations remain from the question the better chance there is that we shall avoid arousing serious opposition to the exchange.

Mr. Barker and General Heisler are about to consult as to the nature of the communications they will address to the Persian Telegraph Administrator.

As regards the question whether the Khaf-Seistan section be placed ultimately under the control of the Indo-European Telegraph Department or the Indian Telegraph Department, I notice that His Majesty's Consul at Seistan, who appears to have been consulted by the Government of India, is strongly in favour of the latter course, on the ground that the Indo-European Telegraph Department is tied down in many respects by its agreements with the Persian Government. I cannot say whence Major Kennion gets this impression, which, so far as I can learn from Mr. Barker, is an entirely erroneous one. It is quite true that the Indo-European Telegraph Department does not accept messages in the Persian language unless they are written in Roman characters, and that they refuse all messages of a political nature; this is not, however, in consequence of any arrangement with the Persian Government, but merely as a precaution to prevent the Department's employés getting entangled in political squabbles which do not concern them, and also in pursuance of our general policy to avoid all appearance of interference in internal affairs. Two other points that he has raised are that "log" messages, i.e., private messages sent gratis as a matter of favour, are not allowed by the Indo-European Telegraph Department, and that originals of all telegrams are handed over to the Persian Administration. The second of these points, Mr. Barker informs me, is quite inaccurate, and as to the former, he assures me that such reasonable facilities for "log" messages are given as are consistent with common honesty towards the Persian Administration.

His Majesty's Consul-General at Meshed takes precisely the contrary view, in which I entirely concur, viz., that the control should be vested in the Indo-European Telegraph Department. He points out, with truth as it seems to me, that, if the control is taken over by the Indian Administration, considerable suspicion may be aroused among the Persians who are accustomed to deal with the Indo-European Telegraph Department, and have great confidence in it. To this I would add that it will certainly not make it easier for us to obtain the Robat extension if the Persian Government know that it will pass under the control of the Indian Administration.

I have sent the substance of the foregoing to the Government of India by telegraph, but it seems to me unnecessary to incur the expense of employing that means of communication with yourself, as the question is already settled.

I have informed both Mr. Barker and the Russian Minister of the contents of your telegram No. 83 of the 16th instant, to the effect that all the details of the exchange will be settled in St. Petersburg.

I have, &c.
(Signed) CHARLES M. MARLING.

[15997]

No. 170.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received May 11.)

(No. 100.)

Sir,

Tehran, April 24, 1908.

WHILE, as will be seen from the monthly summary, the general condition of Persia has been more tranquil, at the capital all the indications show but too clearly that the struggle between the Shah and the "Enjumens" has lost none of its bitterness. I say advisedly the "Enjumens," for in the last trial of strength, in which the Shah was again worsted, the Assembly played a very small part indeed, and the Ministers, except by tendering and withdrawing their resignations within forty-eight hours, none at all. The point at issue was simply whether the Governor of Tehran and Chief of Police, by causing the arrest of the alleged authors of the attempt on the Shah's life without warrant from the Minister of Justice, had acted constitutionally or not. On the whole the question may be answered in the negative, but, considering how nearly the matter concerned the Shah, the "Enjumens" might well have condoned the irregularity. They are, however, so nervously anxious to prevent the smallest infringement by the Shah of the people's new-won liberties that they insisted on pushing the matter to an issue.

The Shah was much exasperated, and Nizam-es-Sultaneh assures me that His Imperial Majesty is more than ever set in his hostility to the Constitutional movement. According to his Excellency, the Shah, under the influence of his *entourage*, resolutely refuses to learn wisdom from the series of defeats he had undergone at the hands of the popular party, and is even now preparing for another struggle, which may take place, according to his Excellency, very shortly. Nizam-es-Sultaneh represented the members of the present Cabinet, and himself in particular, as having played the

part of Constitutional Ministers to perfection, and, as a matter of fact, his Excellency has managed to explain his attitude during the crisis to the "Mejlis" so skilfully that he has emerged with a less degree of unpopularity than before.

What the attitude of the Cabinet as a whole would be in the case of a serious crisis it is hard to say. Nizam-es-Sultaneh is of the old school, which only understands the system of government by "pishkesh," but, realizing the present strength of the popular party, is waiting on events. It will probably, however, be of little moment which way the Ministers lean in case of an acute crisis, for, between their respect for the Shah, on the one hand, and their dread of the "Enjumens" on the other, they have allowed their influence as the executive power to dwindle away to a minimum. It must, however, be said in their defence, that money, the possession of which might have saved them from their present situation, is entirely lacking.

The outlook is far from hopeful. The "Enjumens," conscious of their strength, presume to interfere in every branch of the Administration, and, with the narrow or ignorant and suspicious views of the majority of their leaders, their interference makes the task of government well nigh impossible.

I have, &c.
(Signed) CHARLES M. MARLING.

[15999]

No. 171.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received May 11.)

(No. 102.)

Sir,

Tehran, April 24, 1908.

I HAVE the honour to report that I have received from the Minister for Foreign Affairs a copy of the Memorandum alluded to in my telegram No. 107 of the 20th April, sent to his Excellency by the Persian Commissioner at Urmia, exposing his views as to the conditions on which the negotiations should be renewed. The greater part of this production is quite unintelligible even to Persians, and in the inclosed translation those passages have been omitted.

The point which Mohtashem-es-Sultaneh appears to wish to make is that, so long as the Turks are in occupation of Persian territory—by which I presume he means the territory under Persian administration previous to the Turkish move on Lahijan and Vasneh—it will be impossible for the Persians to obtain evidence in support of their claim, or, in other words, Mohtashem-es-Sultaneh desires a return to the *status quo ante*, a quite impracticable proposition.

No news of Taher Pasha's whereabouts has reached Tehran for the last three weeks.

I have, &c.
(Signed) CHARLES M. MARLING.

Inclosure in No. 171.

*Mohtashem-es-Sultaneh (Persian Commissioner on the Turco-Persian Frontier) to
Mushir-ed-Dowleh.*

March 25, 1908.

IN reply to your cypher message respecting the frontier question, I informed your Excellency that I would send full particulars by post, which I now have the honour to do.

Your Excellency's telegram gave some hope, because on account of the procrastination on the part of the Turks no result can be achieved without a proper basis. Now that such a basis is to be considered, I think it necessary to bring the following points to your notice:—

First, the Agreement between Mirza Hussein Khan and Ali Pasha only lays down that the *status quo* should be observed by both sides. No mention of any points on the frontier was made. There is nothing in it which can be referred to in the present case, except that it proves the present encroachments of the Turks, who have not observed the stipulation of this Agreement. But the Turks consider that this instrument is a strong document in favour of the violation of the Treaty, as was stated by Taher Pasha at one of the sittings, and the reply was given that the Agreement was a temporary one between two Representatives, and could never cancel

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a Treaty between two Governments, a contention which he admitted, although the said Agreement proves that the Turks have violated its stipulations.

Secondly, the important point which you should bear in mind is that the Persian Representatives at every Commission have observed the second and third Articles of the Treaty referring to the abandonment of all claims on both sides. Therefore the Persian Representatives have never put forward any claim, but simply insisted on the line of the *status quo* which was in their possession at the time of the tour of the Commissioners of the four Governments. But the Turkish Representatives did not observe the Treaty stipulations, and Dervish Pasha claimed a certain line. Zekki Pasha has extended the claim. Taher Pasha has made a still more extensive claim. Therefore it is necessary that the two parties should put forward their claims and give proofs, or that both should give up their claims and return to the line of the *status quo* as had been witnessed by the Representatives of the mediating Powers at the time of their tour, and that it should be the line which at the time of the conclusion of the Treaty was in possession of the two parties.

[After a long and greatly involved argument, which is incomprehensible in the Persian, and quite impossible to translate intelligibly, the letter goes on as follows:—]

What we must refer to the mediating Powers is this: that as the encroachment of the Turks on Persian territory is universally known, if we have to act according to justice, Treaty, Agreement, *status quo*, maps, possessions, proofs, and arguments, first, the Turks must withdraw from Persian territory, and then in accordance with Articles II and III of the Treaty of Erzeroum, and the possessions of both countries at that time, as stated by the two Commissioners, the dispute should be settled. Otherwise, so long as Persian territory is in the possession of the Turks, it is difficult for us to adduce proofs. Further, in spite of the encroachments on Persian territory, any measure for the delimitation of the frontier will be a confession as to the rights of the Turks.

[There is another sentence of which the drift is very obscure, though the choice of words, with due regard to their rhyme, is exceedingly happy.]

[16002]

No. 172.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received May 11.)

(No. 13. Commercial.)
Sir,

Tehran, April 18, 1908.

HIS Majesty's Consul-General at Bushire has sent me a Report by Mr. Chick on the working of the Imperial Bank of Persia's branch at Bushire, in amplification of the paragraph on the subject contained in the Memorandum sent to you in Major Cox's despatch No. 7, Commercial, of the 25th November, 1907.

I will not trouble you, Sir, with all the detailed criticism passed on the bank's Bushire branch. I have placed the facts before the bank's chief manager and chief inspector here, who are quite willing to give the matter their consideration, and to take it, as Major Cox earnestly entreated them to do, "broad-mindedly and in the spirit in which it is written," in view of the possibility of German competition in the near future.

It is urged that there is room for reform in the bank's management in the South of Persia generally; that the business should be extended to other Gulf ports; that the question of separating the bank's agencies at Shiraz and Bushire (the latter is at present a sub-agency of the former) should be carefully reconsidered; and that a certain class of business (known technically as "documentary bills") should receive careful attention.

I hear from other sources that, apart from the general desirability of strengthening our commercial position in the South of Persia, the bank has ample room to increase the scope of its operations in Bunder Abbas in connection with the transfer to the north of the customs revenues which now pass through native hands.

These suggestions and some others are, I understand, considered by the bank's managing officers in Tehran to be worthy of careful study, but as they are questions of general policy, the Board of Directors in London will have to decide upon them.

It is further suggested that extended facilities should be granted to the native merchants with the object of increasing the bank's waning popularity, but I fear I am

unable, in the light of all the facts brought to my notice, to indorse this recommendation.

I am entirely in agreement with Major Cox's very decided opinion as to the necessity of taking timely measures to avert the extension of German commercial interests and influence at our expense, which the competition of a German bank would undoubtedly considerably assist, and I would venture to suggest that the Directors of the Imperial Bank of Persia should be urged by you, Sir, to give this question their careful consideration.

I conceive that the primary difficulty with which the Directors will have to contend, if they propose to deal seriously with this matter, will be the choice of a suitable man to study and report upon the technical intricacies of the whole case on the spot.

I have, &c.
(Signed) CHARLES M. MARLING.

[16004]

No. 173.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received May 11.)

(No. 15. Commercial.)
Sir,

Tehran, April 20, 1908.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 21, Commercial, of the 31st December, 1907, I have the honour to transmit the accompanying copy of a Report from His Majesty's Consul-General at Bushire, on the subject of the formation of a British Lighterage Company at Bushire.

The Report appears to me still further to accentuate the imperative need for the interested British Shipping Companies to lose no time in inaugurating a service on the lines described, a procedure which, while benefiting trade in general, will strengthen in a marked degree our commercial position and prestige, and deprive Germany of a possible commercial foothold from which, if once obtained, it would be a difficult and costly task to dislodge her.

I observe from Mr. Mallet's letter to the Board of Trade of the 10th February last (Confidential print Persia (B), section 2, of the 10th February), that the question is considered an urgent one, and I trust that with the information now available the Board of Trade will be enabled to impress upon the Shipping Companies a full sense of their responsibility in the matter.

I have, &c.
(Signed) CHARLES M. MARLING.

Inclosure 1 in No. 173.

Major Cox to Mr. Marling.

(No. 43.)
Sir,

Bushire, March 19, 1908.

IN accordance with the instructions conveyed in your despatch No. 3 of the 12th January, 1908, I now have the honour to append more detailed information as to the desirability of establishing a British lighterage service at Bushire.

This question of lighterage is so intimately connected with the hamal-bashi problem that it will probably be of use to briefly recapitulate the history and working of that system as seen during the last few years.

As written by the agents of the Anglo-Algerian Steam-ship Company to the then Director-General of Customs in 1901:—

"According to the bill of lading, the steamer's responsibility ceases the moment the goods leave the ship's tackles, and the Company is not disposed to accept fresh and serious responsibilities such as now demanded by you (viz., the landing of the cargo by the Steam-ship Companies). . . . According to the contract between the Steam-ship Company and the shippers, it is the duty of the shippers' assignees to land their own goods the moment the steamer is ready to discharge."

This attitude of the Companies is perfectly correct, as pointed out in a letter of the 10th February, 1906, from Mr. Noel-Paton, then Secretary to the Bombay Chamber of Commerce and now Director-General of Commercial Intelligence in India:—

"The Committee understand the absolute responsibility of a ship under a bill of lading to terminate when the goods are delivered safely overside, unless the bill of lading stipulates otherwise."

As long ago as 1901 the difficulty resulting from the division of authority over the hamal-bashi came into prominence, both the merchants and Customs then contending that the landing contractor was their employé. Different Customs directors, in 1904 and 1906, asserted their paramount authority over the contractor, and their right to dismiss him, but for the last two years the Customs have dropped this argument, having seen the necessity of separating the functions of the contractor, and have taken up the position that the landing should properly be effected by the Companies, and that the latter are entitled to appoint any one they choose for the purpose.

In 1903 an attempt was made by the agent of one of the Shipping Companies to form a combine among the agents of the four or five British Steam-ship Companies running to Bushire for the landing of cargo, with a capital of 5,000*l.*, but the proposal came to nothing.

By 1904 so many complaints had arisen between the steamer agents and the Customs as to the landing of cargo that the former all addressed their several principals, the Shipping Companies recommending the formation by them of a Lighterage Company.

In this connection the agents of the British India Steam Navigation Company and the Bucknall Steam-ship Lines wrote to the Consulate on the 19th September, 1904:—

"The whole matter has been referred home to the principals of the firms concerned, and we are unable to say at present whether they intend to endeavour to form a Landing or a Landing and Delivery Company."

In 1905 the question of "hamalage," or landing, again became acute, and the united European houses drew up a one-year contract and a tariff with an Armenian, the rates being considerably raised to provide for the better payment of the boatmen. But all along the hamal-bashis have been men of straw. Under the old Customs régime the Governors used to farm the contractorship out to Mahommedans for exorbitant sums, and the wholesale robbery and disappearance of goods from and in transit to the Customs was the consequent result. The Armenian contractor who followed was, perhaps, more honest, but possessed no means to carry on a work requiring considerable initial capital, and still less any power to control the impudent and unruly boatmen. Both before and after the expiry of his contract fresh disturbances arose, the boatmen refusing on several occasions to proceed to sea unless high rates were guaranteed or outstanding arrears paid up; this meant that the steam-ship agents were frequently compelled to pay the boatmen in advance, and led ultimately to another raising of the landing tariff at the end of the summer of 1907. Heavy debts caused the dismissal of the Armenian contractor, and more recently a Mahommedan, upon whom his mantle descended, has been found to be implicated in several disappearances and thefts of merchandise from the Customs' premises.

The present state of affairs and the untrustworthiness of the merchants' nominees has occasioned great annoyance, but it is most unlikely to find a remedy except in a radical change of method and management.

There is no native of Bushire who has the capital to undertake the work and run it effectively, and at the same time on honest lines; the requirements of the Shipping Companies, the grasping and dictatorial attitude of the boatmen, and the difficulty in recovering landing charges from native traders render the post trying as hitherto constituted, if not distinctly unremunerative.

Throughout this controversy the British Steamer Companies have persistently refused to interest themselves, and, in reply to the advice of their agents here, have held that the landing business did not concern them, and that if it were a profitable investment the agents themselves should undertake it. This, however, was an impossible step to expect from the agents, who might at any moment be deprived of their agencies, and the course suggested is open to many objections on other grounds.

The question of the Lighterage Company was last urged on the Shipping Companies by their agents in October 1906 and August 1907, when, on the refusal of lightermen to go off to the steam-ship "Tabaristan," the agents of the Anglo-Algerian Line finally notified their principals:—

"If you do not accept our proposals, please do not bother yourselves in future by asking us why this or that steamer was detained."

To such a point had the hectoring attitude of the lightermen reached that on that occasion the Vice-Consul was appealed to by the captain of the ship, and compelled to go in person to the quay-side and ask the boatmen as a personal favour to proceed to sea, and thus save the steamer costly demurrage.

The continued refusal of the Shipping Companies to intervene was in itself a matter for considerable regret. A new factor has, however, altered the whole situation since 1907, and makes their further non-intervention in the lighterage question a danger not only to themselves, but also to English trade as a whole. I refer to the activity of the German Shipping Company, and its zeal for all kinds of doubtfully remunerative enterprise, supported by a State subsidy, as it undoubtedly is, in the hope of finding and utilizing weak spots in the present British trade stronghold.

The existence of Messrs. Wöneckhaus' ill-will towards the hamal-bashi régime, accentuated as it was by the fact that it was managed by British firms and under British official influence, has already been noted elsewhere. The first move in what may well seem a directly threatening movement towards British commerce was taken the other day, when the agents of the Hamburg-Amerika Line notified the Director of Customs that in future they would have no dealings with the hamal-bashi, but would land their own cargo and put it in the custom-house themselves. There was no rule to force them to work through the landing contractor, and no valid objection could be raised.

To my mind, however, this may prove an opening and a starting-point for a wide-spread attack on the British carrying trade—to England, at any rate. It would be only necessary for the Germans to bring out a small steam-lighter and have two or three native craft for them to offer to put cargo on board their own steamers and discharge it for a nominal sum (or even free for a short time), just in order to win the hearts of fickle Persian traders, and thus gradually attract to German vessels the custom now enjoyed by ourselves.

As stated by Mr. G. A. Lloyd in his recent Report, it is already a significant fact that Manchester goods are brought out in German steamers. It would be easy, once a regular carrying business and *clientèle* is established, to induce importers by low prices to try German cottons and prints instead of English ones.

It is to be doubted whether the British Shipping Companies have in their previous refusals to combine to effect the lighterage ever contemplated this turn of affairs. More than once before the Anglo-Algerian Company have made costly mistakes in not taking heed of warnings as to competition, and the presence of the opposition steamers of Andrew Weir and Co. in the Gulf is a recent instance of the result.

I consider it imperative, under present conditions, that there should be no break in the conveyance of cargo from British steamers to the Persian shore in British lighters; it is obvious that a German-managed connecting link between the British ship and Persian trader might become a most inconvenient factor, which every effort should be made to get rid of.

The difficulty in the past has always been to make the Shipping Companies themselves take interest in the project, which has been strongly and repeatedly urged upon them by their agents and the captains of their vessels, and it will probably need considerable direct pressure by Government to induce them to abandon their uncompromising attitude.

I will now endeavour to reply to the questions asked in your despatch under reply.

Resources necessary for the Inauguration of a Lighterage Company.

Under the former contract the Armenian landing contractor was bound to subsidize twelve native sailing lighters, each capable of holding some 200 bags of sugar, a stipulation never kept to.

Consensus of opinion seems to indicate that the purchase of some six to eight lighters, at an aggregate cost of 600*l.* to 800*l.* approximately, and if possible the provision of a small steam-tug or steam-lighter of sufficiently light draught to come into the shallow harbour should be the primary outlay, exclusive of the wages of boatmen, the salary of a superintendent and native tally-clerks.

In 1906 the hamal-bashi's receipts for landing and manipulation of cargo for ten months were handed in as 149,263 *krans* (approximately 2,714*l.*), and his expenses for boat hire alone for the same period were 30,618 *krans* (approximately 557*l.*).

The hamal-bashi could not make the undertaking pay, but his losses were chiefly incurred in the work of manipulation and portorage, which would lie outside the province of any institution for lighterage purposes alone.

With the principal Shipping Companies interested in the Lighterage Company, it should not be difficult to arrange a system by which delivery orders on the Customs would only be issued to the consignees after payment of the landing charges, a procedure which had to be adopted once before when a strike of the hamal-bashi's boatmen forced the steamer agents to hire boats themselves at the arbitrary rates of their owners, and which tends to do away with one of the chief causes of past inefficiency, i.e., indefinite delay by the native merchants in paying charges due to the contractor for work already done.

The responsibility of a Lighterage Company would cease with delivery into the charge of the Customs, and it would remain for the consignees to arrange separately the delivery of their goods at their godowns.

Attitude of Local Authorities.

The local Persian authorities would have no call to interfere with the institution of a Lighterage Company. As far as we know, there is no indication of the Governor of Kalantar directly benefiting by the present system.

Attitude of Local Merchants.

The principal consideration with native merchants is cheapness, and, provided a British Lighterage Company did not deliver goods at dearer rates, or with more carelessness than at present, no objections could be raised. This would be especially so were the present Shipping Companies to combine to form a nucleus of capital and boats for lighterage. In fact, some of the Armenian community have been trying in the last month to promote a lighterage scheme to be run with native capital, but the unwillingness of Persians to hazard any deposits of money, discord between the various native merchants and the financially crippled condition of Bushire are obstacles to the scheme coming to any good head. Moreover, it is problematic whether, on account of the notorious unscrupulousness and dishonesty attending native concerns, the Shipping Companies and agents would, or should ever, consent to land their cargo through such connections, and in any case it is certain, without the co-operation of the shipping agents, no Lighterage Company could pay its way.

It might be advisable for the Shipping Companies participating in the Lighterage Company to secure the good-will—even to the extent of co-operation—of the two Persian agents of Messrs. Andrew Weir and Co. and the Bombay-Persian line.

Attitude of Local Customs.

The local Director of Customs does not now claim to interfere with the landing of cargo; indeed, he has for some time past maintained that the Shipping Company should land their own cargoes, and believes such an arrangement to be the true solution of the constant difficulties with the native hamal-bashis.

Reasons for pressing for Change in present System.

The general outline of the present chaotic state of the landing question have already been stated. The tariff is only so far fixed, as the boatmen are content to work at the present rates; there is no power and no contract now binding them to insure their obedience to instructions. In 1906 the tariff rates were raised 20 per cent., in the summer of 1907 they were raised further. The contractorship has gone from bad to worse, and at the present the shipping agents are perplexed to know what to do. The Persian Government has largely itself to blame for this state of affairs, and as it has never interfered to ameliorate the situation, it can lay no shadow of a claim to put forward objections to a purely trading establishment in no way trespassing on its sovereign rights.

Likelihood of British Shipping Combine undertaking Work.

It has already been seen that the Shipping Companies have been deaf in the past to the proposals of their agents. But it is probable that, if they were specifically approached by Government, and the gravity of future possibilities and the present

situation pointed out to them, they could be led or driven into taking action in the direction desired. The Government of India might be prepared to bring influence and pressure to bear on the British India Steam Navigation Company to obtain their coalition.

The Companies chiefly concerned are:—

The Anglo-Algerian Steam-ship Company (Messrs. Strick and Co.), which might provide three lighters.

The British India Steam Navigation Company (another three boats or more).

The Bucknall Steam-ship Lines (one boat).

There is little likelihood that the West Hartlepool Steam Navigation Company would contribute, owing to the paucity of their sailings. It is for the Companies above named to decide whether they would ask the Bombay-Persian Steam Navigation Company to join them.

Entry of some outside British Firm.

As stated above, it is eminently necessary that the lighterage service should be connected with the Shipping Companies, and until every means of inducement has failed it would be wise not to bring an alien British concern on to the scene.

Government Guarantee.

A guaranteed interest on the capital would certainly smooth the way for the Companies to undertake the formation of a Landing Company. Opinions are not unanimous as to the prospects of such a Company, some of the shipping agents holding that there would be at least a working profit on the yearly outlay; another that there would be practically no profits, possibly a slight deficit.

There is, in fact, so much difference of opinion, and the information on which to base anything like a reliable estimate, whether of profit or possible loss, is so inconclusive, that I am having statistics worked out showing the tonnage, the number of packages of each separate article of import landed during the year, the cost of landing calculated on the hamal-bashi's present promiscuous tariff, and a scale per ton which would on the whole leave the average cost of landing consignments about the same as now. Until we get this, it is impossible to form a definite opinion as to what a guarantee on the part of the Government of India, either against loss or to insure a reasonable percentage to a Lighterage Company on their outlay, would involve.

The completion of such statistics will take some little time, and I do not think it advisable that this communication should wait for them. I shall probably be able to telegraph the general result, if necessary, simultaneously with the arrival of the present post at Tehran.

I have the honour, in conclusion, to append a copy of a letter recently addressed to me on the subject under report by the principal local agents for British lines plying to the Gulf, and you will observe the views expressed therein generally bear out my statements.

I am forwarding a copy of the correspondence to the Government of India.

I have, &c.

(Signed) P. Z. COX, Major, British Resident in the Persian Gulf, and His Britannic Majesty's Consul-General for Fars, &c.

Inclosure 2 in No. 173.

Letter addressed by British Shipping Agents at Bushire to Vice-Consul Chick.

Sir,

Bushire, March 10, 1908.

IN reply to your inquiry as to the present influence of the hamal-bashi question on the lighterage on steamers at this port, we have the honour to give it as our opinion that the actual condition of affairs is detrimental in the extreme to our interests, besides causing us from time to time infinite trouble and annoyance, which ought not to be thrown upon ourselves as shipping agents, in inducing the boatmen to go out at all, and to forgo their constantly increasing demands for extra remuneration. There is no landing contractor honest enough for the post.

We have in the past represented to our head offices that it would be in their own interests to combine to effect the landing of cargoes, and whether such business might be a profitable concern or not, we can only consider the possibilities of the German line taking advantage of the present difficulties as very likely indeed. This would be no light matter to the interests of our principals. At present far too much of our time is wasted, without any remuneration to ourselves, with the troubles between the hamal-bashi and the boatmen, and the proper landing of cargo, and in disputes regarding packages which are alleged to have never been landed. This further tends to involve us in difficulties with native merchants, which is very undesirable.

We have, &c.
(Signed) GRAY, PAUL, AND Co.
A. AND T. J. MALCOLM.

[16070]

No. 174.

Mr. G. Barclay to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received May 11.)

(No. 240.)
Sir,

Pera, May 5, 1908.

WITH reference to Mr. Wratishaw's telegram No. 29 of the 2nd instant, reporting that the recent outrages to the south of Urumia were mainly the work of Kurds from Mergavar and Ushnu, for whom the Turkish authorities were directly responsible, I have the honour to report that the Russian Ambassador called upon me yesterday to inform me that he was about to make representations to the Porte urging them to restrain the Kurdish Chiefs responsible for these outrages, and his Excellency asked me for my support.

Although I had already spoken to the Grand Vizier on the subject, and received his assurance that the most stringent instructions had been sent to the frontier officials to restrain the Kurds under their direct authority from committing depredations, I promised M. de Zinoviev again to urge the Grand Vizier in the sense desired. I saw the Grand Vizier in the afternoon, and made the representations as promised. His Highness denied that the offending Kurds were under Turkish authority, and told me that he had already, at the request of M. Zinoviev, telegraphed repeating the instructions of which he had previously informed me.

I have, &c.
(Signed) G. BARCLAY.

[16072]

No. 175.

Mr. G. Barclay to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received May 11.)

(No. 242.)
Sir,

Pera, May 6, 1908.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 230 of the 30th ultimo, I have the honour to transmit herewith copy of a despatch from His Majesty's Consul at Erzeroum, reporting the dispatch of further troops for Van and the calling out of reservists at Bitlis.

I have, &c.
(Signed) G. BARCLAY.

Inclosure in No. 175.

Consul Shipley to Mr. G. Barclay.

(No. 20.)
Sir,

Erzeroum, April 25, 1908.

WITH reference to my immediately preceding despatch No. 19 of the 20th instant, I have the honour to report to you that the 2nd (Izpir) Battalion of Redifs of the 52nd Regiment left this town yesterday for Van.

The 3rd (Gumushkhané) Battalion of the 52nd Regiment, to which I referred in my above-mentioned despatch as being expected here shortly, has not yet arrived, but certain of its officers, I am informed, are at Erzeroum awaiting further orders.

Mr. Safrastian, Dragoman in charge of His Majesty's Vice-Consulate at Bitlis, reports under date of the 11th instant that the reservists of that town, amounting to

some 400 men, have been called out, but had not as yet received their arms. He reports further that the Redifs of Moush and Sairt are said to have been also called out, and to be holding themselves in readiness.

I have, &c.
(Signed) H. S. SHIPLEY.

[16036]

No. 176.

Mr. O'Beirne to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received May 11.)

(No. 219.)
Sir,

St. Petersburg, May 6, 1908.

WITH reference to your telegram No. 100 of the 14th ultimo, I have the honour to transmit copy of an *aide-mémoire* which I have received from the Imperial Ministry for Foreign Affairs in regard to the suggested joint representations at Tehran by the British and Russian Representatives relative to the subsidy to be paid to the German school in that town. The Russian Government is of opinion that it should be left to the discretion of the two Representatives to decide as to what steps should be taken in the matter.

I may add that the question is fully dealt with by Mr. Marling in his despatch No. 91 of the 23rd ultimo, which I am forwarding to you by bag to-morrow.

I have, &c.
(Signed) HUGH O'BEIRNE.

Inclosure in No. 176.

Memorandum communicated by M. Isvolsky to Mr. O'Beirne, April 22 (May 5), 1908.

EN se référant à la lettre de Sir A. Nicolson, au nom de son Excellence M. Isvolsky, en date du 2 (15) Avril courant, le Ministère Impérial des Affaires Étrangères se fait un devoir d'aviser l'Ambassade de la Grande-Bretagne qu'ainsi qu'il appert d'une communication du Ministre de Russie à Téhéran, la question d'un subside à allouer à l'école Allemande à Téhéran n'est pas encore résolue d'une façon claire et définitive. En tout cas il est hors de doute que le Medjliss a refusé de sanctionner le prélèvement de ce subside sur les revenus douaniers.

M. de Hartwig et Mr. Marling sont d'accord, paraît-il, qu'il serait préférable de ne pas faire de démarche collective à ce sujet auprès du Gouvernement Persan et de se borner à rappeler, séparément et oralement, aux Ministres des Affaires Étrangères et des Finances de Sa Majesté le Schah les droits des deux États sur ces revenus.

Le Gouvernement Impérial est d'avis, dans ces conditions, d'abandonner à l'appréciation des Représentants de la Grande-Bretagne et de Russie la procédure qu'ils considèrent la plus appropriée à la situation, et se déclare prêt à munir M. de Hartwig d'instructions dans ce sens, si le Cabinet de Londres partage ce point de vue.

Saint-Petersbourg, le 22 Avril (5 Mai), 1908.

[16340]

No. 177.

Mr. O'Beirne to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received May 12.)

(No. 223.)
Sir,

St. Petersburg, May 8, 1908.

WITH reference to your despatch No. 117, Confidential, of the 27th ultimo, I have the honour to state that I yesterday asked the Minister for Foreign Affairs whether he had any information as to the report that M. Stemrich had obtained a Concession for the construction of a railway from Tehran to Kermanshah.

His Excellency said that he had no information of the kind. At his request I left a note of the question with him with a view to his letting me know should he hear anything about the alleged Concession.

I have, &c.
(Signed) HUGH O'BEIRNE.

[1580]

[16377]

No. 178.

India Office to Foreign Office.—(Received May 12.)

THE Under-Secretary of State for India presents his compliments to the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and, by direction of Viscount Morley, forwards herewith, for the information of the Secretary of State, copy of inclosures in a letter from the Foreign Secretary to the Government of India, dated the 2nd ultimo, relative to the Russian post at Gumbad-i-Kabus.

India Office, May 11, 1908.

Inclosure 1 in No. 178.

Major Sykes to Government of India.

(Confidential.)

Sir,

Meshed, February 20, 1908.

I HAVE the honour to forward a short note on the Russian post at Gumbad-i-Kabus. The information was in part furnished by a special agent, and in part by the Karguzar.

I have, &c.
(Signed) P. M. SYKES.

Inclosure 2 in No. 178.

Note on Gumbad-i-Kabus.

THE Gumbad-i-Kabus post was founded in 1897 by the Russians with the idea of checking frontier raiding, and also of increasing their political influence in this part of Persia.

The post is situated some 50 miles east-north-east of Astrabad, some 4 miles to the north of the main route from Astrabad to Bujaud, and about a mile to the south of the River Gurgan.

The gumbad or dome, which in shape somewhat resembles a lighthouse, was built in A.D. 997 by Kabus, son of Vashingir, the head of a local dynasty. It is set on a mound rising some 80 feet above the very level plain. The whole of this mound has been occupied by the Russians, who have fortified it with a ditch. The house of the Russian official almost touches the gumbad on the south side. On the north side is a guard-house on the mound. On the same side, at the foot of the mound, are barracks for 50 Cossacks and 100 Turkoman levies. Close by, on the south side of the mound, are some twenty shops, owned by Armenians and Persians. Here, too, is the Persian Karguzari, guarded by twenty sarbazes, and the telegraph office. The telegraph line runs to Chat-i-Atrek, or Chatli, a fort which I saw across the Atrek in 1893, and thence to Kizil Arvat. To the north, about a mile away, near the river, is the Persian custom-house.

Previously to the establishment of the Gumbad-i-Kabus fort, Marawa Tappa, near the river Atrek, was occupied; but after a short experience it was found to be unsuitable, and Gumbad-i-Kabus was selected.

[16397]

No. 179.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received May 12.)

(No. 121.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Tehran, May 12, 1908.

STEAMERS on Lake Urumia. Your telegram to Sir A. Nicolson, No. 88. Stevens is asking for information. Have Russian Government replied?

6397]

No. 180.

Sir Edward Grey to Mr. O'Beirne.

(No. 125.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Foreign Office, May 12, 1908.

PRINCE IMAM KULI'S Concession.

With reference to my telegram No. 88 of the 30th March.

You should ask the Russian Government to be good enough to give their reply as soon as possible.

[15378]

No. 181.

Foreign Office to India Office.

Sir,

Foreign Office, May 12, 1908.

WITH reference to your letter of the 29th ultimo on the subject of the exchange of telegraph lines in Persia between Great Britain and Russia, I am directed by Secretary Sir Edward Grey to transmit to you herewith copies of telegraphic correspondence with His Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires at Tehran relative to the withdrawal by each Power of all its signallers from the sphere of the other.*

Since, from the last of these communications it is now clear that Russian signallers on Persian telegraph lines are not prohibited by any specific regulation from forwarding British messages, it appears to Sir E. Grey that the last objection to the proposed withdrawal is removed, and that, from the point of view of His Majesty's Government, all that is now required to insure the due transmission of such messages on the lines controlled by Russia in Persia is the conclusion with the Russian Government of an arrangement whereby each Power should undertake to instruct its employés to accept all messages sent by the agent of the other.

Sir E. Grey is accordingly disposed to approach the Russian Government without further delay with regard to this proposal, and I am to transmit to you draft of a telegram conveying the necessary instructions on the subject to His Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires at St. Petersburg.†

Sir E. Grey would be glad to learn whether Secretary Viscount Morley concurs in the terms of this draft.

Printed copies of the papers mentioned in the draft are also inclosed for convenience of reference.‡

I am, &c.
(Signed) W. LANGLEY.

[16492]

No. 182.

India Office to Foreign Office.—(Received May 13.)

THE Under-Secretary of State for India presents his compliments to the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and, by direction of Viscount Morley, forwards herewith, for the information of the Secretary of State, copy of inclosures in a letter from the Foreign Secretary to the Government of India, dated the 16th ultimo, relative to Pasand Khan and the Birjand postal contract.

India Office, May 12, 1908.

* Nos. 106, 120, 123, and 140.

† See No. 196.

‡ Sir A. Nicolson, No. 132 (8608/07), No. 204 (12616/07), No. 317 (20715/07), and No. 444 (29535/07); see Part XIII, No. 417; and ante, No. 117.

Inclosure 1 in No. 182.

*Government of India to Major Kennion.**Simla, April 4, 1908.*

(Telegraphic.)

PASAND KHAN.

Please repeat telegram of the 19th ultimo referred to in your telegram of the 29th ultimo.

Inclosure 2 in No. 182.

*Major Kennion to Government of India.**Seistan, April 8, 1908.*

(Telegraphic.) P.

REPETITION of Tehran telegram asked for in your telegram of the 4th instant is given below:—

"No. 14, dated the 19th March.

"Your telegram No. 9, dated the 6th February.

"I have been informed by Minister of Foreign Affairs that Pasand Khan has been called to Tehran, and his contract, which has been cancelled, has been given to Nabhi Khan. Is this satisfactory?"

Inclosure 3 in No. 182.

*Major Kennion to Government of India.**Seistan, March 29, 1908.*

(Telegraphic.) P.

FOLLOWING telegram sent to His Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires, Tehran:—

"Please see your telegram No. 14.

"I am informed by the Director of Customs that he has received no orders about Pasand Khan. The same is said by the Karguzar."

[15987]

No. 183.

Sir Edward Grey to Mr. O'Beirne.

(No. 131.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, May 13, 1908.

WITH reference to my telegram No. 122 of the 8th instant, relative to the question of the use of the Kermanshah customs revenues as security for foreign loans to Persia, I transmit to you herewith copy of a despatch from His Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires at Tehran,* showing how these sums came to be assigned to the payment of the interest on the loans contracted by the Persian Government with the Imperial Bank of Persia, and reporting the actual situation of the matter.

You are aware from the telegraphic correspondence which has passed on the subject that His Majesty's Government would prefer that the arrangement at present in force should cease, and should be succeeded by one under which the revenues of the Kermanshah customs should be used exclusively for the payment of the loans of the Russian Bank, while the interest of those of the Imperial Bank should be met out of the proceeds of the Bushire customs.

Mr. Marling, however, is of opinion that it would be premature at present to approach the Persian Government with a view to obtain their sanction to this readjustment, and in these circumstances it seems better to be content with the best arrangement which the Imperial Bank can make with the Russian Financial Agent in Persia on the lines proposed by the latter.

I have to request you to explain to the Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs the cause of the misunderstanding which arose between Mr. Marling and M. de Hartwig with regard to this question, and to inquire of his Excellency whether the Russian

Government have any objection to an arrangement such as that proposed by M. Ostrogradski, supposing it should be possible to conclude one satisfactory to both parties, such arrangement to remain in force pending the solution of this question by the transfer by the Persian Government of the lien held by the Imperial Bank of Persia from Kermanshah to Bushire.

I am, &c.
(Signed) E. GREY.

[16672]

No. 184.

Mr. O'Beirne to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received May 14.)

(No. 82.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

St. Petersburg, May 14, 1908.

IMAM KULI Concession: Your telegram No. 125 of the 12th instant.

I am given to understand by M. Isvolsky that he will let me have a reply shortly.

[16036]

No. 185.

Sir Edward Grey to Mr. O'Beirne.

(No. 127.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Foreign Office, May 14, 1908.

WITH reference to my telegram No. 91 to Mr. Marling: Subvention to German school.

You should communicate the purport of the above telegram to the Government to which you are accredited, and request them (as promised in the Memorandum of the 5th instant, forwarded in your despatch No. 219) to send similar instructions to their Representative at Tehran.

[16036]

No. 186.

Sir Edward Grey to Mr. Marling.

(No. 97.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Foreign Office, May 14, 1908.

WITH reference to your despatch No. 91 on the subject of the subvention to the German school at Tehran.

It is suggested by the Russian Government that the decision as to what steps should be taken with a view of reminding the Persian Government of the rights over the customs revenues held by the British and Russian Governments should be left to yourself and your Russian colleague.

Our adhesion has been given to this proposal, and you are authorized to make the necessary arrangements with M. de Hartwig.

[15988]

No. 187.

Sir Edward Grey to Mr. Marling.

(No. 98.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Foreign Office, May 14, 1908.

PERSIAN Loans.

With reference to your despatch No. 91 of the 23rd ultimo.

Inform the Government to which you are accredited that, as we have received no reply to the note imposing conditions as to suspension of sinking fund, and as the interest and sinking fund have not been paid, no discussion of the said conditions can be admitted.

You may choose the moment which you consider most suitable for making this communication.

[15376]

No. 188.

Foreign Office to India Office.

Sir,

Foreign Office, May 14, 1908.

I AM directed by Secretary Sir Edward Grey to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 17th March relative to the reappointment of a Military Attaché to His Majesty's Consulate-General at Meshed. It is stated in this letter that Viscount Morley understands that Sir E. Grey is not disposed to adhere to the view previously expressed by him that the appointment is one of purely Indian interest, and that Viscount Morley is prepared, if Sir E. Grey will accept the principle of an equal division of cost between the British and Indian exchequers, to approve the retention of Captain Smyth in the post till the 20th October next, and the continuance of the appointment then for a period of three years, the question of maintaining the post being reconsidered at the end of that time.

I am to state in reply that a misapprehension appears to exist as to Sir E. Grey's views on this subject. In his opinion the description given of this appointment in Sir E. Gorst's letter of the 11th February, 1905, as "one of purely Indian interest" is even more applicable to it at this moment than it was at the time when those words were written.

The conclusion of the recently signed Anglo-Russian Convention has modified the situation in Central Asia from the point of view of Imperial interests by removing, in a great measure, the urgent need for the collection of information as to the movements of Russian troops in that region.

Sir E. Grey considers that His Majesty's Consul-General and Vice-Consul at Meshed, both of whom are officers of His Majesty's Indian Army, should be able to collect without difficulty such information of this nature as is still necessary, more especially in view of the fact that they will, presumably, still remain in possession of those means of obtaining it which have been devised and are now controlled by the Military Attaché.

In view of these considerations, Sir E. Grey would not feel himself justified in applying to the Treasury, on grounds of Imperial necessity, for sanction to the charge to British funds of a moiety of the cost of maintaining a Military Attaché to His Majesty's Consulate-General at Meshed.

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. LANGLEY.

[16735]

No. 189.

India Office to Foreign Office.—(Received May 15.)

Sir,

India Office, May 14, 1908.

IN reply to your letter dated the 8th instant as to the application which it is expected will shortly be made to the Persian Government on behalf of Messrs. Haji Ali Akbar and Sons (Limited), of Manchester, for a Concession to extract red oxide on the Island of Sirri, I am directed by Viscount Morley to inclose copy of a telegram which, in accordance with Sir E. Grey's request, has been sent to the Government of India on the question whether, in view of the present state of the controversy as to the status of the island, any protest should be made to the Persian Government against the grant of such a Concession.

It seems clear to Lord Morley that no protest should be made unless His Majesty's Government are prepared to take the necessary steps to prevent practical effect being given to any Concession granted by the Persian Government.

As regards the question of obtaining from the firm concerned a guarantee that the Concession will be controlled by them as a British Company in British interests, and will not be transferred to nor shared in by any foreigner, it seems to Lord Morley that it would be advisable to approach Messrs. Haji Ali Akbar and Sons on the subject without delay, if this can be done, as presumably it can, without prejudicing the power of His Majesty's Government to protest effectually hereafter against the grant of a Concession by the Persian Government. Otherwise it seems necessary to defer

any communication with the firm till it has been decided whether or not such a protest should be made.

I am, &c.
(Signed) A. GODLEY.

Inclosure in No. 189.

Viscount Morley to Government of India.

(Telegraphic.) P.

India Office, May 13, 1908.

PLEASE refer to letter dated the 30th ultimo to the Foreign Office, forwarded with letter of the 1st instant from Political Secretary, India Office, regarding a probable application for Oxide Concession in Sirri. I should be glad to have your views by telegraph on the question which has been raised whether, in view of the present state of the controversy as to sovereignty over the island, assertion by Persian Government of any pretension to grant a Concession should be allowed to pass without a protest by His Majesty's Government.

[15989]

No. 190.

Foreign Office to India Office.

Sir,

Foreign Office, May 15, 1908.

WITH reference to your letter of the 21st March last, respecting the services of the Khan of Bander Rig in connection with the capture of the Dayir pirates, I am directed by Secretary Sir E. Grey to inclose copy of a despatch from His Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires at Tehran on the subject.*

In view of the facts mentioned by Mr. Marling, Sir E. Grey would propose, subject to the concurrence of Secretary Viscount Morley, to take no further action in the matter.

I am, &c.
(Signed) LOUIS MALLET.

[16926]

No. 191.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received May 17.)

(No. 122.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Gulahek, May 17, 1908.

RESIGNATION of Ministry.

The Ministers have again resigned, and the Shah has sent, through the President of the Assembly, a cordial telegram to Nasr-ul-Mulk, in which he invites him to come back, but I think it improbable that he will do so.

[16927]

No. 192.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received May 17.)

(No. 123.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Gulahek, May 17, 1908.

GERMAN loan. Your telegram No. 97 of the 14th instant.

Until the German bank is opened here I do not think that Persian Government can obtain a loan from Germany secured on customs.

I understand that Ehtesham-es-Sultaneh is still in Berlin, and, as a precaution, inquiries might be made whether he is negotiating anything there.

[17096]

No. 193.

India Office to Foreign Office.—(Received May 18.)

THE Under-Secretary of State for India presents his compliments to the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and, by direction of Viscount Morley, forwards herewith, for the information of the Secretary of State, copy of a telegram to the Viceroy, dated the 13th instant, relative to a probable application to the Persian Government for an Oxide Concession in Siri Island.

India Office, May 16, 1908.

Inclosure in No. 193.

Viscount Morley to Government of India.

(Telegraphic.) P.

India Office, May 13, 1908.

PLEASE refer to letter dated the 30th ultimo to the Foreign Office, forwarded with letter of the 1st instant, from Political Secretary, India Office, regarding a probable application for Oxide Concession in Siri.

I should be glad to have your views by telegraph on the question which has been raised, whether, in view of the present state of the controversy as to sovereignty over the island, assertion by Persian Government of any pretension to grant a Concession should be allowed to pass without a protest by His Majesty's Government.

[16927]

No. 194.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir F. Lascelles.

(No. 35.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Foreign Office, May 18, 1908.

PERSIAN loans.

With reference to telegram No. 123 of yesterday's date from Tehran.

It would be undesirable for the German Government to learn that inquiries are being made by us. Have you any source from which you could obtain information without recourse to the Government?

[17203]

No. 195.

India Office to Foreign Office.—(Received May 19.)

Sir,

India Office, May 16, 1908.

WITH reference to your letter dated the 12th instant relating to the arrangement with the Russian Government for the exchange of the Tehran-Meshed and Khaf-Nasratabad telegraph lines, I am directed to inform you that Viscount Morley concurs in the view that the best solution of the question, so far as the employés of the two Governments are concerned, is to be found in the withdrawal of the signallers of either Power from the zone of the other.

Lord Morley concurs in the terms of the draft telegram which the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs proposes to address to His Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires at St. Petersburg on the subject.

I am, &c.
(Signed) A. GODLEY.

[17203]

No. 196.

Sir Edward Grey to Mr. O'Beirne.

(No. 133.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Foreign Office, May 20, 1908.

EXCHANGE of Persian telegraphs.

With reference to the despatch from Sir A. Nicolson No. 193 of the 13th April.

Although it was not mentioned specifically in Sir A. Nicolson's Memorandum of the 23rd March last that Russian signallers would be allowed to use the line on the section Khaf-Nasratabad between specified hours, there was no intention on the part of His Majesty's Government of endeavouring to deprive them of this privilege, to which they would inevitably be entitled in view of the Concession of a similar privilege to our signallers on the Tehran-Meshed line and on the Meshed-Khaf section. You should inform the Russian Government of the above in answer to their *aide-memoire* of the 12th ultimo, and should also place the following considerations before them:—

The whole question of the exchange has now been submitted to a further examination by His Majesty's Government, who have formed the opinion that the best solution, as far as the matter of signallers is concerned, would be that each Power should entirely withdraw its employés from the sphere of the other, in accordance with the original proposal contained in the Memorandum which was presented by Sir A. Nicolson to M. Isvolsky on the 15th April of last year, and that an arrangement should be concluded by which an undertaking should be given by each Power to issue to its own employés within its sphere instructions to transmit all messages sent by Agents of the other Power or in the interests of its subjects with all proper regard to accuracy and dispatch. An exchange of notes might be adopted as the means of concluding such an arrangement.

It is the opinion of His Majesty's Government that the above solution is more strictly in conformity not only with the spirit of the Anglo-Russian Convention, the chief object of which is to remove all possible causes of friction which might arise between Russia and Great Britain, a fact which received such clear and full expression in the *aide-memoire* of the Russian Government dated the 13th June of last year, but also with that of the first two Articles of the Agreement of the 31st August, 1907. It was understood at the time that the "same conditions" of which mention is made in the said two Articles were the conditions affecting relations with and obligations towards the Persian Government and the repair and upkeep of the lines, and this was indeed the view by which His Majesty's Government were guided when they agreed that Russian control should be continued over the Meshed-Khaf section.

Whilst making it clear that His Majesty's Government are only actuated by the wish to insure the success of the Convention by regulating their actions strictly in accord with its spirit, you should ask the Russian Government to accept this proposal.

[15994]

No. 197.

Foreign Office to India Office.

Sir,

Foreign Office, May 20, 1908.

I AM directed by Secretary Sir Edward Grey to transmit to you herewith copy of a despatch from His Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires at Tehran respecting the wish of the Sheikh of Mohammerah and of the Bakhtiari Khans for closer relations with Great Britain.*

I am to suggest, for the consideration of Secretary Viscount Morley, that, in view of the fact that the Sheikh of Mohammerah, by reason of the geographical situation of his possessions and his considerable local influence, is in a position to hinder and even to prevent the prosecution of any foreign enterprise in the country watered by the Karun, it is very desirable to secure his absolute adherence to British interests in order to insure that his power may always be exercised in their favour by opposing any schemes which may be distasteful to His Majesty's Government.

Sir E. Grey is therefore of opinion that the general assurances already given to the Sheikh should be repeated, and that he should be informed that they will be

considered to hold good as regards his successor. It might further be pointed out to the Sheikh that His Majesty's Government have engaged to respect the independence and integrity of Persia, which involves maintenance of the *status quo* in that country and includes the continuance of the Sheikh's present state of autonomy. External aggression would constitute an infringement of Persian integrity, which is recognized by the Anglo-Russian Convention.

The Bakhtiari Khans, on the other hand, occupy a different position, and their aims appear to be in the direction of independence. His Majesty's Government are not bound by any assurances with regard to them. They have not shown themselves to be trustworthy in the past, and their recent behaviour towards British enterprises in their country, such as those of the Oil Concessions Syndicate and of the Euphrates and Tigris Steam Navigation and Persian Transport Companies (Limited), has not been satisfactory.

Sir E. Grey therefore considers that any engagement given to the Khans, beyond an assurance of friendly sympathy, would be likely to be utilized by them to create difficulties between His Majesty's and the Persian Governments.

I am to state that Sir E. Grey would be glad to receive in due course an expression of Lord Morley's views and of those of the Government of India on this question in its general aspect and also with regard to the suggestions set forth above.

I am, &c.
(Signed) LOUIS MALLET.

[16735]

No. 198.

Foreign Office to India Office.

Sir,

Foreign Office, May 20, 1908.

I AM directed by Secretary Sir Edward Grey to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 14th instant relative to the application which it is expected will shortly be made to the Persian Government on behalf of Messrs. Hadji Ali Akbar and Co. (Limited), of Manchester, for a Concession to extract red oxide on the Island of Sirri.

I am to inform you in reply that Sir E. Grey concurs in the view of Secretary Viscount Morley, that no protest should be made against the pretension of the Persian Government to grant such a Concession, unless His Majesty's Government are prepared to take the necessary steps to prevent practical effect being given to it.

Should it be decided, after consideration of the views of the Government of India, to make such a protest, it will become necessary to warn the interested Company of the action contemplated, and it therefore appears to Sir E. Grey to be undesirable now to demand their assent to conditions regarding the exploitation of a Concession which His Majesty's Government may subsequently feel obliged to prevent them from obtaining at all.

Sir E. Grey would accordingly propose, if Lord Morley concurs, to abstain from addressing any communication whatever to the Company until the views of the Government of India have been received and considered, and a definite course of action decided upon.

I am, &c.
(Signed) LOUIS MALLET.

[17443]

No. 199.

India Office to Foreign Office.—(Received May 21.)

Sir,

India Office, May 20, 1908.

IN reply to your letter, dated the 15th instant, as to the proposal to express to the Persian Government His Majesty's Government's appreciation of the services of the Khan of Bandar Rig in connection with the capture of the Dayir pirates, I am directed to say that Viscount Morley concurs in the view that, in the circumstances reported by Mr. Marling, no further action is called for in the matter.

I am, &c.
(Signed) A. GODLEY.

[17512]

No. 200.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received May 21.)

(No. 124.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Tehran, May 21, 1908.

ALLIANCE between Sheikh of Mohammerah and Bakhtiari Khans. My despatch No. 97 of the 23rd ultimo.

According to a report from His Majesty's Consul a formal written alliance has been concluded between the Sheikh of Mohammerah and the Bakhtiari Khans. Provided that their present privileges are respected and that no increase of taxation is demanded, they engage under this Agreement to remain loyal to Persia, but they will combine to resist any interference. Both parties made professions of friendship towards this Legation, and informed the Consul verbally that cases of dispute between the two parties would be referred to him.

This Agreement, which appears to be quite spontaneous, should make for tranquillity in these regions, but it is not likely to last long.

[13229]

No. 201.

Sir Edward Grey to Mr. Marling.

(No. 82. Confidential.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, May 21, 1908.

YOU will have observed that in the Memorandum prepared by Mr. J. D. Rees, M.P., on British interests in Persia, which formed the second inclosure in my despatch No. 70, Confidential, of the 6th instant, it is stated that "there is already a Concession for certain roads, including Ispahan to Bushire, and for 'trains Renard' all over Persia. A Persian holds this and has power to dispose of one-third of it to foreigners."

In his telegram No. 154 of the 18th November, 1905, Mr. Grant-Duff reported the contemplated formation of a Company composed of nine Persians and one foreigner, with a capital of about 45,000*l.*, for running a service of Renard motor trains between Tehran, Kum, and Kermanshah, and between Tehran and Meshed, but no further record of this or of any similar enterprise appears to exist in the archives of this Department.

I have accordingly to request you to report any information which you may be able to obtain with regard to this question.

I am, &c.
(Signed) E. GREY.

[17585]

No. 202.

Imperial Bank of Persia to Foreign Office.—(Received May 22.)

Sir,

25, Abchurch Lane, London, May 21, 1908.

WITH reference to our letter of the 13th ultimo, addressed to Mr. Mallet, the following is an extract from a letter received last mail from our chief office in Tehran:—

"There is no fixed proportion of the Kermanshah receipts allotted to us; what we get is by the goodwill of the Administration, and if we insist on legal rights the receipts would probably not be paid in to us, the more so that the Russians contest our right to the Kermanshah customs, which they state are hypothecated to them."

The Russian Bank has not yet been established at Kermanshah.

I further beg to inclose for information a list of the Kermanshah customs receipts paid to the bank between the 21st September, 1907, and the 20th February, 1908.

I have, &c.
(Signed) G. NEWELL,
Manager.

Inclosure in No. 202.

KERMANSHAH Customs Receipts from the 21st September, 1907, to the 20th February, 1908.

		Payment by Customs	Krans.
September 28, 1907	150,000
October 5, "	250,000
" 12, "	120,000
" 22, "	120,000
" 26, "	150,000
November 5, "	80,000
" 11, "	200,000
" 16, "	200,000
" 21, "	120,000
" 30, "	100,000
December 7, "	100,000
" 12, "	120,000
" 21, "	80,000
" 28, "	60,000
January 4, 1908	60,000
" 9, "	80,000
" 16, "	120,000
" 25, "	100,000
" 30, "	100,000
February 6, "	80,000
" 11, "	80,000
" 20, "	70,000
			2,540,000

[17624]

No. 203.

Mr. O'Beirne to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received May 22.)

(No. 84.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

St. Petersburg, May 22, 1908.

INCIDENTS on Russo-Persian frontier. My despatch No. 210 of the 30th ultimo. Following official announcement has been made here:—

On the 20th instant a communication was addressed by Russian General to the Governor-General of Tabreez, to effect that unless an indemnity was received for loss of Russian lives and property, Russian troops would cross the frontier and satisfaction would be exacted, if necessary, by execution of those concerned, and by destruction of villages. Persians were given until mid-day to-day to reply. Persian Legation here is in communication with Russian Government on the subject.

[17753]

No. 204.

Mr. O'Beirne to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received May 23.)

(No. 85.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

St. Petersburg, May 23, 1908.

INCIDENTS on Russo-Persian frontier. My immediately preceding telegram. Russian demands for indemnity.

A request made by Persian Chargé d'Affaires for delay of fifteen days was referred to Governor of Caucasus, who has given his consent.

[17827]

No. 205.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received May 25.)

(No. 103.)

Sir,

Tehran, April 30, 1908.

ON Saturday last, the 25th, the Minister of Finance, who, so far as I can learn, had made no previous public announcement of his intention to do so, presented his Budget to the Assembly, and in the speech with which he introduced it stated, as regards his proposals for raising the import duties on tea and sugar, that he had

consulted the Representatives of the two interested Powers—Great Britain and Russia—and had every reason to hope that the proposed modification of the Tariff would encounter no opposition from them.

Like every one else, M. Bizot was of course aware that Sani-ed-Dowleh had for long been lucubrating some kind of financial scheme based on the elevation of the duties on these articles, but until 3 o'clock on Saturday afternoon, when the Minister of Finance informed him that he was on the way to the House to lay the Budget before it and gave him a short sketch of it, I think M. Bizot was as little prepared as I was to hear that a definite scheme had been elaborated. He has at all events never been consulted in any sort of way as to the scheme as a whole, and has not even now been given a copy of it.

At this very unexpected display of independence on the part of the Minister of Finance the French Minister invited the Russian Minister and myself to hear from M. Bizot the impression he had formed of the situation after a month's work in Persia.

We accordingly met at the French Legation on the 28th, and from M. Bizot's conversation I gathered his general appreciation of the position to be somewhat as follows:—

The Persian Government is practically at the end of its resources. The Department of Finance is daily besieged by crowds clamouring for payment of claims of every sort and kind; the greater part of these claims are for pensions which, more often than not, had never been earned, but obtained by bribery, and which, in many cases, had been abolished by the Assembly. The latter fact, however, made no sort of difference. No one examined the validity of a claim, and merely to be rid of the importunate claimants the Minister of Finance was freely giving out orders on the Customs, which had no funds to meet them, and was consequently in turn besieged by the hungry horde. The general attitude seemed to be based on the belief that sooner or later a foreign loan would be negotiated, and the first thing to be done would be to satisfy all these pensioners from its proceeds. There had been genuine disappointment that when he, M. Bizot, arrived he had not at once pulled millions from his pocket, and when he told Persians that, in his opinion, Persia could not for some little time expect to raise anything but a very modest loan, they could not believe he was talking seriously, as a smaller loan meant a smaller commission!

When he first began to work he found it practically impossible to get any information at all. Of late matters had slightly improved in this respect, but it was still exceedingly difficult to get any figures to work on, and the Persians generally, and in particular the Ministry of Finance, seemed bent on preventing him from getting into touch with the people who could assist him and to whom he could give useful advice, such, for instance, as the members of the Finance Committee of the Medjliss. Nasr-ul-Mulk had warned him in Paris that this would be the case, that all his actions and words would be misrepresented, and that if he made any written proposal to the Minister of Finance he should at the same time send a copy to the Medjliss. Nasr-ul-Mulk's advice had been only too well founded. As to the Budget, Sani-ed-Dowleh had never asked his assistance in preparing it, though once or twice he had asked him for information which he probably required for that purpose, but until the Minister on Saturday afternoon had told him of its general tenor he had no idea what proposals it contained. He thought that Sani-ed-Dowleh's secrecy in the matter was rather the result of vanity and a wish to show that he could dispense with European assistance and to gain credit for the unaided production of the first Persian Budget. Of this he, M. Bizot, had no desire to rob the Minister; on the contrary, he was particularly anxious that it should be generally known among foreigners, as well as by Persians, that he was in no way responsible for Sani-ed-Dowleh's Budget.

As regards the possibility of the Persian Government obtaining a loan from Germany, M. Bizot thought that any operation on a large scale was almost out of the question. The only way in which Germany could gain any voice in the financial affairs of Persia was by the establishment of the German Bank and making advances on current account. This was quite feasible, and it was a danger very difficult to guard against.

The conclusion at which we arrived after a long discussion was that it was necessary to prevent the evident inclination that existed to ignore M. Bizot, and it was agreed that for this purpose the Russian and French Ministers and I should give the Minister for Foreign Affairs to understand that it would be quite useless for the Persian Government to approach the Governments of Great Britain and Russia with any proposal for a modification of the Tariff without having first consulted the Financial Adviser.

Accordingly at his usual reception on the 29th I spoke to Mushir-ed-Dowleh, and

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pointed out to him that, so far from having ever given Sani-ed-Dowleh or any other Persian Minister any encouragement to think that His Majesty's Government were prepared to give their assent to any increase of the import duties, I had always been most careful to say that I had no knowledge at all of His Majesty's Government's views, but I felt quite convinced that they would not even consent to take into consideration any proposal that had not been examined by and prepared with the assistance of the Financial Adviser. Sani-ed-Dowleh's statement in Parliament that he had sounded the Representatives of the two Powers and had found them favourably disposed was therefore absolutely unwarrantable as far as I was concerned, and, to the best of my belief, the attitude of the Russian Minister had all along been the same as my own. Mushir-ed-Dowleh said that he was perfectly well aware of this, and had often told Sani-ed-Dowleh that it was no use laying proposals to modify the Customs Tariff before Parliament without first obtaining the assent of the Powers having Commercial Treaties, but the Minister of Finance was so convinced of his own financial genius, so greedy of popularity in the Medjliss, that he refused to listen to reason, and had brought in his Budget in spite of all warning. The best thing would be that I should speak to him myself. Both the French Minister and M. de Hartwig spoke to Mushir-ed-Dowleh the same day on this subject.

The following day I saw Sani-ed-Dowleh and taxed him with having held out hopes to the Medjliss which my language to him did not warrant. I had always spoken with the greatest reserve on the question of a modification of the Tariff, and yet he had led the Medjliss to think that he had assured himself of the assent of His Majesty's Government, when His Majesty's Government had never expressed any opinion at all on the question. I could only say again what I had always given the Persian Government to understand, viz., that His Majesty's Government would not entertain any kind of proposal on which the Financial Adviser had not been consulted. His Excellency could not have been unaware of this, and yet he had laid definite proposals before the Chamber, and had done no more than inform the Financial Adviser of their general tenor. His Excellency said the financial embarrassment was so great that the Government could not wait until M. Bizot had had time to complete his study of the situation, and he had been obliged to take immediate action unless the country was to be ruined; as to what he had said as to obtaining the assent of the two Powers, he was so convinced of their friendly attitude that he had felt justified in expressing a confident hope that they would not withhold it. So hopeless, indeed, was the prospect, and so weary was he of the vain struggle of doing something to improve it, that he had that morning decided to resign his office.

I said that the one thing which His Majesty's Government desired was to see Persia peaceful and prosperous, but if we were asked to make a concession to the detriment of our commercial interests we were entitled to examine the proposals laid before us, and for this purpose His Majesty's Government would be content to take the opinion of the Persian Government's own Financial Adviser. His Excellency said that he would much prefer that His Majesty's Government should send out some one from London to examine the situation; if M. Bizot had to be consulted on every question he would virtually become Minister of Finance, which would be intolerable. Persia did not want a second M. Naus. I scouted the idea of sending some one from London. His Excellency had just been talking of the urgent need of finding resources, and yet he now wanted to see a second specialist from Europe who would have to begin again where M. Bizot had started a month ago. If M. Bizot had not learnt as much as could have been wished of the finances of the country, the fault lay solely with the Persian Government, who obstinately declined to furnish him with the material to work on. In declining to avail themselves of the services of the Financial Adviser the Persian Government were acting like a sick man who, having called in a doctor, refused even to ask advice. As for the fear that M. Bizot would ever aim at obtaining the position that M. Naus had occupied, his Excellency must be conscious that such a thing was quite out of the question. M. Bizot had no executive functions; his office was purely advisory, and the Persian Government could accept or reject his counsel as they liked.

His Excellency reverted again and again to the idea of special experts being sent out from London and St. Petersburg to examine the situation, a suggestion which I as frequently put aside as one which would never be entertained. Persia, I said, not only wished to obtain a concession from us practically without return, but wanted to lay down utterly unreasonable conditions as to the manner in which we should grant the favour. I hoped his Excellency would reconsider his decision to resign. Constant changes in the Ministry would not help matters, and, from a merely personal point of view, to resign immediately after introducing his Budget would have a most damaging effect on the esteem and popularity he so deservedly enjoyed in the country.

I have tried to include in the foregoing report the essential points of a conversation of more than an hour and a-half. The impression which it produced on my mind is that Sani-ed-Dowleh will not easily be reconciled to the idea of acting with M. Bizot. His motives are probably mixed. In spite of repeated failures in other undertakings he has an extraordinary belief in his own powers, and puts aside every suggestion counter to his own ideas with a calm assurance of superior knowledge; and I think that in this case his independence of M. Bizot is, to a great extent, the outcome of this buoyant self-confidence. On the other hand, there is little reason to doubt that with his pronounced Germanophil sympathies he is disposed to look on M. Bizot as a probable Anglo-Russian agent, and, knowing what the popular feeling is on this subject of the Anglo-Russian accord, he is reluctant to appear before the Assembly as the Minister who has permitted that agent to obtain any control over Persian financial affairs. It is possible also that, recognizing that an increase of the customs is absolutely indispensable, and that this remedy can only be obtained with the assent of Great Britain and Russia, he is unwilling openly to avow that, financially, Persia is dependent on the two Powers, and would like to represent them as being the only obstacles to reorganization and reform.

It is unnecessary to give a detailed account of Sani-ed-Dowleh's Budget. Its object ostensibly is to provide a larger revenue in order to enable the Persian Government to restore some degree of order, to construct roads, and to improve public education. For this purpose various new internal taxes are proposed, notably a tax on real property in towns, which has hitherto been exempt from any form of taxation, and, what is of immediate interest to ourselves, an increase of the import duties on tea and sugar. There is no suggestion of a foreign loan, but it is obvious that if once a surtax on these commodities were established the resulting revenue would provide a convenient guarantee for effecting an operation of that kind.

I have, &c.
(Signed) CHARLES M. MARLING.

[17828]

No. 206.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received May 25.)

(No. 104.)
Sir,

Tehran, May 4, 1908.

JUST before his departure on leave, His Majesty's Minister received a message from His Majesty the Shah, through Hussein Kuli Khan Nawab, requesting that the Legation would use its influence with the Imperial Bank of Persia to obtain a further period of grace for a certain native banker, Hajji Bagher, for the repayment of an advance of 80,000 tomans effected with the bank on behalf of His Imperial Majesty. Two or three days later the Nawab called on me to explain the matter again, and, in reply, I said that, while I should be very glad to transmit His Majesty's request to the bank, I could not ask Mr. Rabino to act otherwise than in the interests of the bank. I accordingly mentioned the matter to Mr. Rabino, and informed him in writing that, while the Legation would be glad if he could see his way to obliging the Shah, the question was of course one for his own judgment. It was eventually agreed on that the bank would grant Hajji Bagher a further period of grace, but on condition that, by way of extra security, the Shah would give to the bank his note of hand for 80,000 tomans. Mr. Rabino also informed me verbally that the transaction was a perfectly safe one, as Hajji Bagher's debt to the bank was secured in other ways, and that, as a matter of fact, he only owed about 30,000 tomans, and even this could be probably recovered without much difficulty.

When, towards the end of November, the period of grace being over, Mr. Rabino requested me to press for the payment of the Shah's note, I believed that he only desired indirect pressure to be brought on Hajji Bagher, but I nevertheless, both in writing and verbally, requested Mushir-ed-Dowleh to bring the matter to His Imperial Majesty's notice and obtain a settlement. From what I learnt subsequently from Mr. A. O. Wood, it appears, however, that, on the security of the Shah's note of hand, Mr. Rabino had advanced a further sum of 80,000 tomans nominally to Hajji Bagher, but really, no doubt, to His Imperial Majesty; and since then I have constantly urged on the Minister for Foreign Affairs that his Excellency must obtain settlement. Mushir-ed-Dowleh has promised repeatedly that the Shah will redeem his signature "in a few days," and quite lately asked me to agree that the bank should surrender the Shah's note of hand in exchange for an undertaking to pay within a fixed period.

As this was only a form of renewal, I asked Mr. Rabino what reply I should make, and, with his concurrence, I declined to entertain any such arrangement.

There is clearly every intention on the part of the Shah to evade payment as long as possible, and, as the prospect of applying sufficient pressure through the Persian Ministers seems to be remote, and I can scarcely make a personal application to the Shah, I venture to request your instructions as to the steps I should take.

I have, &c.

(Signed) CHARLES M. MARLING.

[17829]

No. 207.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received May 25.)

(No. 105.)

Tehran, May 4, 1908.

Sir,

THE German Minister called on me this morning and asked what I thought were the causes of the resignation of the Ministry. I said that one account had it that Nizam-es-Sultaneh was so mistrusted by his colleagues that in order to be rid of him they had resigned in a body, while the Prime Minister's own version was that he could not conduct the Administration of the country satisfactorily owing to the intrigues and interference of the Shah. Count Quadt said he had heard that the Minister of Finance had resigned in consequence of the conversation I had had with him last Thursday, in which I had given his Excellency to understand that the Financial Adviser was the real Minister of Finance, acting in the interests of England and Russia, and he, Count Quadt, would like to know what the facts were. I replied that as Sani-ed-Dowleh had told me himself that his decision to resign had been taken before I saw him, one part of the story which had reached him was disposed of. I had sought an interview with Sani-ed-Dowleh to tell him that in introducing his Budget he had no right to say that he had practically assured himself of the readiness of His Majesty's Government to assent to a modification of the Customs Tariff, when as a matter of fact I could not possibly have said anything of the kind, as I was unaware of His Majesty's Government's views myself, and when he had approached me on the subject in connection with his railway projects, I had expressed my personal opinion that the scheme was utterly impractical. I had tried to dissuade Sani-ed-Dowleh from resigning, as his successor would probably be less capable than he; his foolish vanity had led him into a false position, and realizing it too late he wanted to escape by resignation. It was only to be expected that he would try to find a plausible explanation, and that of the patriot seeking to save his country from foreign control was the first to hand. As for M. Bizot, his position was perfectly clear: he knew that the assent of Great Britain and Russia, as the only Powers possessing Commercial Treaties with Tariffs annexed, must be obtained before any alteration in the customs duties could be effected, and in any advice he might give to the Persian Government he would have to take the fact into consideration.

I have, &c.

(Signed) CHARLES M. MARLING.

[17767]

No. 208.

Mr. O'Beirne to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received May 25.)

(No. 232.)

St. Petersburg, May 19, 1908.

Sir,

WITH reference to your telegram No. 127 of the 14th instant, I have the honour to transmit to you herewith copy of an *aide-mémoire* which I have received from the Russian Government, to the effect that instructions have been sent to M. de Hartwig, requesting him to concert with Mr. Marling as to the mode of procedure to be adopted towards the Persian Government in regard to the question of the subsidy for the German school at Tehran.

I have, &c.

(Signed) HUGH O'BEIRNE.

Inclosure in No. 208.

Note communicated by M. Isvolsky to Mr. O'Beirne, May 3 (16), 1908.

LE Ministère Impérial des Affaires Étrangères s'empresse de faire savoir à l'Ambassade de la Grande-Bretagne, en réponse à l'aide-mémoire en date du 2 (15) Mai courant, que des instructions ont été envoyées au Ministre de Russie à Téhéran, l'invitant à fixer, d'accord avec Mr. Marling, le mode d'agir que les Représentants des deux Puissances auraient à adopter dans la question d'un subside pour l'école Allemande à Téhéran.

[17768]

No. 209.

Mr. O'Beirne to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received May 25.)

(No. 233.)

St. Petersburg, May 19, 1908.

Sir,

WITH reference to your despatch No. 131 of the 13th instant relative to the question of the use of the Kermanshah customs revenues as security for foreign loans to Persia, I have the honour to transmit to you herewith copy of a *note verbale* communicated to the Russian Government on the 26th April (9th May), and of a further note of to-day's date which I have addressed to M. Isvolsky on the subject.

I have, &c.

(Signed) HUGH O'BEIRNE.

Inclosure 1 in No. 209.

Note communicated by British Embassy to Russian Government, April 26 (May 9), 1908.

EN réponse à l'aide-mémoire du Ministère Impérial des Affaires Étrangères en date du 2 (15) Avril, l'Ambassade d'Angleterre a l'honneur d'informer le Ministère Impérial que le Chargé d'Affaires de Sa Majesté à Téhéran a été muni d'instructions de s'efforcer d'arriver à une solution par laquelle les revenus de la douane de Bouchir seraient affectés, au lieu de ceux de Kermanshah, à la garantie des emprunts conclus par la Banque Impériale de Perse. Néanmoins, Mr. Marling a été autorisé, pour le cas où cette solution rencontrerait trop de difficultés, à se rallier à un Arrangement dans le sens d'une proposition que—comme le Gouvernement de Sa Majesté croit le savoir—l'Agent Financier de Russie en Perse a mise en avant, selon laquelle les revenus de la douane de Kermanshah seraient partagés entre la Banque d'Escompte et de Prêts de Perse et la Banque Impériale de Perse.

L'Ambassade doit ajouter que Mr. Marling n'a pas encore fourni de rapport sur les démarches qu'il a pu faire dans le but indiqué ci-dessus.

Inclosure 2 in No. 209.

Mr. O'Beirne to M. Isvolsky.

M. le Ministre,

St. Petersburg, May 6 (19), 1908.

WITH reference to the *aide-mémoire* from this Embassy dated the 26th April (9th May), I have the honour to inform your Excellency that I have now received fuller information from His Majesty's Government regarding the question of the Kermanshah customs revenues.

Sir Edward Grey desires me to explain that some misunderstanding appears to have arisen between M. de Hartwig and Mr. Marling from the following causes:—

Mr. Marling was unaware that the debts of the Persian Government to the "Banque d'Escompte et de Prêts de Perse" were secured on the customs affected to the services of the regular Russian loans of 1900 and 1902. M. de Hartwig made no distinction between the two forms of debt, but regarded them both as Government

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loans, whereas Mr. Marling considered—and M. Ostrogradsky appears to have agreed with this view—that the former, which are in krans, should be regarded rather as advances on current account.

His Majesty's Government would prefer that the Arrangement at present in force under which the Kermanshah revenues, though forming part of the security assigned to Russia, have for the past two years and more been affected to the Imperial Bank of Persia should now cease, and that it should be succeeded by one under which the revenues of the Kermanshah customs should be used exclusively for the payment of the loans of the Russian Bank, while the interest of those of the Imperial Bank should be met out of the proceeds of the Bushire customs. Mr. Marling is, however, of the opinion that it would be premature at present to approach the Persian Government with a view to obtaining their sanction to this readjustment, and in these circumstances His Majesty's Government are disposed to consent to such an Arrangement as can be arrived at between the Imperial Bank and the Russian Financial Agent in Persia on the lines proposed by the latter.

M. Ostrogradsky has informed Mr. Marling that the additional amount required to make the advances of the "Banque d'Escompte et de Prêts" absolutely sure would not in all probability be large, and that he was quite ready to make some arrangement with the Imperial Bank of Persia for a division of the receipts from the Kermanshah customs.

I am directed to inquire whether the Russian Government have any objection to an Arrangement such as that proposed by M. Ostrogradsky, supposing it should be possible to conclude one satisfactory to both parties; such Arrangements remain in force pending the solution of this question by the transfer by the Persian Government of the lien held by the Imperial Bank of Persia from Kermanshah to Bushire.

I avail, &c.
(Signed) HUGH O'BEIRNE.

[18016] No. 210.

India Office to Foreign Office.—(Received May 25.)

THE Under-Secretary of State for India presents his compliments to the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and, by direction of Viscount Morley, forwards herewith, for the information of the Secretary of State, copy of a telegram from the Viceroy, dated the 18th May, 1908, regarding Lingah dhows flying the German flag.

The rules referred to in the telegram are presumably those printed in Inclosure No. 2 of a letter from the Government of India in the Foreign Department dated the 5th January, 1905, of which a copy is inclosed.*

India Office, May 23, 1908.

Inclosure in No. 210.

Government of India to Viscount Morley.

(Telegraphic.) P. May 18, 1908.

LINGAH dhows flying the German flag. Your telegram dated the 30th ultimo. The following telegram dated the 9th instant, received from Resident in Gulf, in whose recommendations we concur:—

"No ground for supposing that non-British vessels are flying British flag is furnished by inquiries, but the rules do not appear always to be strictly adhered to as regards the acquisition and annual renewal of certificates. I am directing Representatives to bring the rules on the subject to the notice of British subjects, and I would recommend postponement for a few weeks of further steps in connection with German dhows."

* Not printed.

[18120]

No. 211.

India Office to Foreign Office.—(Received May 26.)

THE Under-Secretary of State for India presents his compliments to the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and, by direction of Viscount Morley, forwards herewith, for the information of the Secretary of State, and with reference to the letter from the Foreign Office of the 20th instant, copy of a telegram from the Viceroy, dated the 22nd May, regarding a concession to extract red oxide on the Island of Sirri.

India Office, May 26, 1908.

Inclosure in No. 211.

Government of India to Viscount Morley.

(Telegraphic.) P. May 22, 1908.

SIRRI Island. Your telegram dated the 13th instant.

We would not recommend entering any protest against proposed concession being granted, provided a guarantee in the terms suggested by the Resident in the Gulf is given by the manager of the firm. We think, however, that it would be desirable, in view of possible eventualities in the future, that a formal reservation of the Jowasmi claim should be made.

[18156]

No. 212.

Sir F. Lascelles to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received May 26.)

(No. 15.)
(Telegraphic.) P. Berlin, May 26, 1908.

GERMAN loan for Persia. Your telegram No. 35.

Herr von Schön said this afternoon, in speaking of Persian affairs, that the chief difficulty for Persia consisted in an absolute want of money. Germany had been urged to establish a bank at Tehran, for which she held a Concession, with the object of remedying this want, but there was no immediate prospect of the bank being established, as it was evident that no German financier would advance money to Persia under present circumstances. I have had no opportunity of making direct inquiries on the subject of your telegram.

[18131]

No. 213.

Mr. G. Barclay to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received May 26.)

(No. 117.)
(Telegraphic.) P. Constantinople, May 26, 1908.

FOLLOWING telegram, No. 31 of the 22nd instant, received yesterday from Mr. Wratislaw, Urumia:—

"I have heard nothing of Tahir Pasha's movements.
"The Turkish troops in the Tergavar district have been considerably reinforced."

[18154]

No. 214.

Mr. G. Barclay to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received May 26.)

(No. 118.)
(Telegraphic.) P. Constantinople, May 26, 1908.

FOLLOWING telegram, No. 32, dated the 25th May, received to-day from Mr. Wratislaw, Urumia:—

"In my telegram No. 29 of the 2nd instant I reported the submission of a number of Sunni villages south of Urumia to the Turks. The village of Sheitanabad, in the centre of this district, had still remained in the hands of the Persians, being held by a garrison of 400 men. This place was surrounded three days ago by a large force of Kurds estimated at 4,000, and after some fighting the Persians surrendered yesterday."

There were some Mergaver Kurds, I believe, in the attacking force, but the majority were from Ushnu, where there is a Turkish Kaimakam, and were commanded by Mustaffa Khan, the Chief of the Zguar tribe of Ushnu.

"I cannot help thinking that Tahir is deliberately delaying his arrival in order to allow time for a general forward movement by the Turks, or Kurds under their orders, which I am afraid is to be expected."

[18257]

No. 215.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received May 27.)

(No. 125.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Tehran, May 27, 1908.

INCIDENT on Russo-Persian frontier: telegram No. 84 from St. Petersburg.

Russian Government gave a fortnight's respite at personal request of the Shah. This period of time, the Persian Government assert, is insufficient for them to carry out steps for the arrest of the murderers and the return of the stolen rifles and property which are among the eight conditions imposed by Russia.

The Minister for Foreign Affairs asked me for advice, and I told him that, in my opinion, the Russian demands should be agreed to in principle, and that Persia should do her best to fulfil her promises within the fixed time. I said that she could trust to generosity of Russian Government if this proved impossible.

[17767]

No. 216.

Sir Edward Grey to Mr. Marling.

(No. 103.)

(Telegraphic.) R.

Foreign Office, May 27, 1908.

GERMAN School.

Necessary instructions have been sent to Russian Minister.

[18257]

No. 217.

Sir Edward Grey to Mr. Marling.

(No. 104.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Foreign Office, May 28, 1908.

I APPROVE language held by you to Minister for Foreign Affairs on subject of the Russo-Persian frontier as reported in your telegram No. 125 of yesterday's date.

[17828]

No. 218.

Sir Edward Grey to Mr. Marling.

(No. 86.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, May 28, 1908.

I HAVE received your despatch No. 104 of the 4th instant, relative to the advances made by the Imperial Bank of Persia to the native banker Hajji Bagher on behalf of the Shah.

I approve the action taken by you up to the present as reported in your despatch, and I concur in your view that it would be undesirable for you to make a personal application to His Imperial Majesty with a view to obtain payment of the debt.

The only course open to you in the circumstances would therefore appear to be to continue to press the Persian Government for payment through the usual diplomatic channel.

The case has been explained verbally to the Chairman of the Board of Directors of the bank, who fully realizes the significance of the part played by the bank's Manager-in-chief at Tehran, and who has made no request for any further action by His Majesty's Legation.

I am, &c.
(Signed) E. GREY.

[18389]

No. 216*.

Mr. O'Beirne to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received May 28.)

(No. 87.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

St. Petersburg, May 28, 1908.

RUSO-PERSIAN frontier.

Referring to telegram No. 125 of the 27th instant from Tehran.

I was informed yesterday by M. Isvolsky that, in his opinion, Persian authorities would be unable to exact the satisfaction which Russia required from the offending tribesmen, in which case he intimated that punitive measures would have to be taken by the Russian General.

[18016]

No. 219.

Foreign Office to India Office.

Sir,

Foreign Office, May 28, 1908.

I AM directed by Secretary Sir Edward Grey to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 23rd instant, relative to the use of the German flag by native dhows at Linga.

I am to inform you, in reply, that, in view of the reasons given by His Majesty's Consul-General at Bushire in his telegram of the 9th May addressed to the Government of India, Sir E. Grey concurs in the opinion that further steps with regard to this matter should be postponed for a few weeks.

I am, &c.
(Signed) W. LANGLEY.

[18570]

No. 220.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received May 29.)

(No. 126.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Tehran, May 29, 1908.

I HAVE received following telegram from His Majesty's Consul-General at Bushire :—

“According to telegram I have received from Lieutenant Wilson, oil has been struck at 1,200 feet. The oil rises 75 feet above ground level intermittently.”

[18574]

No. 221.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received May 29.)

(No. 127.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Tehran, May 29, 1908.

PERSIAN Customs launches.

Following incidents have occurred recently in the Gulf :—

His Majesty's ship “Laurence” discovered on the 15th April a Persian Customs launch from Bunder Abbas issuing from an inlet on the Muscat Coast near Musandim. The excuse given was that a dhow had left Bunder Abbas without a clearance, and that she had followed it.

Since then the Customs launch from Lingah visited British Bassidu by night. In spite of protest, the Customs Mudir, the skipper, and part of the crew landed and created a disturbance. The British coal agent was insulted and threatened, and the inhabitants maltreated.

At the beginning of May an inoffensive dhow was seized on the Muscat Coast near Ras Lima, and towed to Bunder Abbas by the Charbar launch.

His Majesty's Consul succeeded in obtaining some satisfaction locally in two latter cases, but the local Belgian Customs Director admits that his control over Persian skippers is not effective.

I had already spoken to the Administrator of Customs in Tehran in consequence of the first case, and he gave instructions in the sense desired ; but it seems that his authority is ineffective, as the two other cases have occurred since then.

In order to put an end to these objectionable practices, by which maritime peace is endangered, and to relieve us of responsibility in the event of retaliation being resorted to by the Arabs in cases such as the first and third, which has been threatened, His Majesty's Consul-General urges that a formal protest should be made to the Persian Government.

Might I be authorized to present a protest in writing with regard to the Bassidu incident on the ground of that place being British, and to address a further note in regard to the first and third incidents, requesting that launches should confine their

[1580]

2 S

activity to Persian waters, and strongly warning the Persian Government against action being taken in Muscat waters by these vessels?

Please inform me what the legal status of Customs preventive vessels is outside the territorial waters of the country to which they belong.

[18730]

No. 222.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received May 30.)

(No. 128.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Tehran, May 30, 1908.

INCIDENTS on Russo-Persian frontier. Telegram from Mr. O'Beirne, No. 87.

It appears from all the Persian official accounts of the incident that the Russian soldiers committed most serious excesses to avenge the death of the Russian officer at Belaswar, who, moreover, was admittedly in the wrong in crossing the frontier. This is confirmed by the meagre independent testimony I have received. That Russia should demand compensation for injuries which are insignificant as compared with the murders and damage committed on Persians by her own troops has consequently aroused great indignation here.

Though the Persian Government are making an effort to give the reparation required within the stipulated time, it is, in my opinion, quite beyond their power to do so; they may not, however, venture to agree formally to the Russian demands, in view of the great public excitement. The appointment of a Mixed Commission of Inquiry is being pressed for, but the Russian Minister has, so far, refused to accept this proposal. The effect here will be lamentable if the Russian Government persist in exacting punishment of the tribe themselves.

(Confidential.)

The Russian Minister here recognizes, I think, that enforcement of the ultimatum is scarcely justifiable, and certainly inexpedient, in view of the fact that Persia has legitimate grounds for complaint against the behaviour of the Cossacks.

[19160]

No. 223.

India Office to Foreign Office.—(Received June 3.)

Sir,

India Office, June 2, 1908.

I AM directed by the Secretary of State for India to invite the attention of the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs to the letter of the 19th February last from the Imperial Bank of Persia as to the continuance of the experimental arrangement, which expires this year, for the establishment by the bank of a branch in Seistan, and to the telegraphic correspondence with the Government of India on the subject. The Bank, it will be observed, make it a condition of maintaining the Seistan branch that the subsidy hitherto paid to them should be increased by a sum sufficient to cover the loss now annually borne by the bank, which may be estimated at 600*l.* per annum.

Commercially, it seems clear that the results of the experiment have not been such as to justify its continuance; politically, Viscount Morley is not satisfied that the advantages accruing from it to British interests are commensurate with the expense involved, and he will be glad to learn whether Sir Edward Grey concurs in this view.

I am, &c.

(Signed) A. GODLEY.

Inclosure 1 in No. 223.

Consul Kennion to Government of India.

(Telegraphic.)

Seistan, March 31, 1908.

I HAVE the honour to submit, for the information of the Government of India, a copy of my despatch, dated the 30th March, to his Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires at Tehran, together with a copy of the communication to which it is a reply.

Inclosure 2 in No. 223.

Mr. Marling to Consul Kennion.

(Telegraphic.)

Tehran, February 12, 1908.

I TRANSMIT to you herewith, in original, a despatch from the Foreign Office regarding the working of the Nasratabad branch of the Imperial Bank of Persia.

I should be glad to receive from you a report stating the reasons for which, in your opinion, the branch in question has been working at a loss, in spite of the subsidy granted by the Indian Government, and in what way it may be possible to remedy the present state of affairs.

Inclosure 3 in No. 223.

Consul Kennion to Mr. Marling.

(Telegraphic.)

Seistan, March 30, 1908.

I HAVE the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your despatch, dated the 12th February last, regarding the working of the Nasratabad branch of the Imperial Bank of Persia, with inclosures.

I am directed to state what, in my opinion, are the reasons for which this branch has been working at a loss, and to suggest means by which it might be possible to remedy this state of affairs.

I would remark, in the first place, that the Memorandum of working expenses inclosed with your despatch does not convey a just idea of the return on the capital actually employed in banking transactions. Money was spent on a site, buildings, and furniture altogether out of proportion to the amount of business a bank could expect to transact in Seistan. The buildings included two good houses, one of which is occupied by the Manager and his wife, the other by the Vice-Consul and Consulate doctor, besides an office, servants' quarters, &c. The area taken up is in excess of what was necessary, and was, I understand, only acquired as it might otherwise have been purchased by the Russians. The excessive price paid for the land (5 kranas per zar) must have been due to a similar reason, for 2 kranas per zar, the rate at which the Consulate land was bought, is certainly not low. Thus, of the capital of 10,000*l.* allotted to the branch, some 5,000*l.* was initial expenditure, while a similar sum represents the actual working capital in the Manager's control. The cost of buildings and furniture is, it seems, written off at the rate of 5 per cent. per annum, the charge being added to the working expenses of the bank. Repairs to the same form another annual charge, so that in twenty years' time the houses will stand as an asset to the bank, paid for entirely by the earnings of the local branch. Though I understand that this is in accordance with commercial custom, it is to my mind questionable whether it is correct to show the charge as a working expense under the special circumstances of the case. Since the branch is maintained mainly at the expense of the Government of India, it seems to me that either the buildings should, at the expiry of the twenty years, become their property, or that the building fund should be kept entirely separate from the profit and loss account of the branch.

Burdened as at present it is by the charges referred to, the local branch can hardly be expected to work otherwise than at a loss.

As regards the question why the gross earnings of the branch are not higher, I would submit the following observations:—

With a working of capital of 5,000*l.*, the branch earned:—

						£	s.	d.
Year ending September 1904	..	..	..	..	..	1	16	2
" " " 1905	..	..	..	..	..	240	4	9
" " " 1906	..	..	..	..	..	353	12	5
" " " 1907	..	..	..	..	..	391	0	0

There has thus been a steady, if slow, increase, last year's figures amounting to approximately 8 per cent. on the capital employed.

The business of the bank is almost entirely confined to exchange, buying and selling drafts, and discounting bills. The rates charged by the bank for drafts are high, varying from 1 to 2½ per cent., and if business were brisk money could be made very rapidly. There is, however, a very limited demand for this class of business in Seistan, and till within the last year a considerable portion of the working capital was,

I believe, lying idle. Another class of business, however, offered, of which more could have been made, and, in my opinion, ought to have been made. I refer to loans to Persians of position. During the year under report and since the following loans made by the branch came to my knowledge:—

			Krs.
1. June 1907	..	The Shaukat-ul-Mulk	.. 40,000 at 12 per cent. payable in 14 days.
2. Sept. 1907	..	"	.. 20,000 " 12 " " 2 months.
3. Feb. 1908	..	"	.. 30,000 " 18 " " 15 days.
4. " " "	..	Naib of Darmian	.. 50,000 " 15 " " 3 months.
5. " " "	..	Sardar Pasand Khan	.. 3,000 interest and period unknown.

These were all recovered when due without difficulty; 4 and 5 are not yet due. The following are among the applications for loans which were refused:—

			Krs.
1. April 1907	..	The Shaukat-ul-Mulk	.. .. 150,000 for 6 to 12 months.
2. June " "	..	"	.. .. 50,000 " 2 months.

(Applied for after the loan of 40,000 kranas had been repaid.)

			Krs.
3. June 1907	..	The Malik-u-Tujjar..	.. .. 30,000 for 3 months.
4. " " "	..	The Mustafi	.. .. 50,000 " 3 "
5. Aug. " "	..	The Naib of Darmian	.. .. 3,000 " 3 "
6. Nov. " "	..	The Malik-u-Tujjar..	.. .. 20,000 " 4 "
7. Feb. 1908	..	The Mustafi, Birjand	.. .. 10,000 " 3 "

(The two latter were intended for purchasing trade goods in India.)

The security offered in each case was, I believe, sufficient to satisfy the local Manager, but the sanction of the head office was refused. The reason assigned for these refusals was the disturbed state of Persia. Their caution may or may not be justified. It is at the same time noteworthy that Kain and Seistan have been among the quietest districts in Persia. What I cannot help thinking may have had more to say to the bank's attitude is that the local branch's capital would have been insufficient to furnish these loans without crippling themselves as regards the exchange business, and that the head office was unwilling to withdraw capital from branches doing the more paying kind of business to enable the Seistan branch to transact business of a less paying kind. I would observe that though loans are considerably less remunerative than exchange transactions, yet they return not less 12 per cent. to 18 per cent., as well as the commission on the draft by which the money is remitted to Tehran or Meshed as the case may be, for they are rarely required for local use.

I think it probable that the branch could have increased its earnings if it had to some extent imitated the Russian Bank in setting up a commercial agency supplementary to their exchange business with India. In this connection I would request a reference to Sir Henry McMahon's diary for the period ending the 24th November, 1903.

Another reason for the earnings of the branch being smaller than they need have been, is that though at the outset the possibilities of Birjand were recognized—Mr. Newell, in his letter of the 22nd July, 1904, to the Foreign Office, correctly referred to it as "a far more important place than Nasratabad as a trade distributing centre"—the Bank, till the middle of 1906-7, showed little energy in pushing their business in this place. Had they done so, it is my belief the profits of the Seistan branch would by now have been considerably larger than they are.

I now come to suggestions for the future. In February 1907 an agency to the Seistan branch was started at Birjand in charge of Mr. Howson. This has proved very successful, and business has increased in a very satisfactory manner. Mr. McMurray, the local Manager, is hopeful that, with the assistance of this agency, there will be no loss on the working of the branch for the current year. Lately, however, the operations of the branch have been cramped for want of capital.

Many applications for drafts on India have been received at Birjand, but owing to the branch's want of funds in India, the rates quoted were too high and no business ensued. Want of funds in Meshed and Seistan have similarly resulted in applications for drafts on these places being refused. It is obvious that in order to give the branch a fair chance of paying its way, it should not be starved of funds. My suggestion is therefore that the capital of the Seistan branch should be increased to admit of an increase in the exchange business as well as to provide for loans.

The successful results of the Birjand agency under Mr. Howson, the greater part of whose time is taken up with other work, indicate that it would be advisable for the bank to have a properly qualified agent at this place. From a commercial point of

view, it would indeed have been better that Birjand should have been made the local head-quarters of the branch from the first, but this is now out of the question—owing to the amount of capital sunk in land and buildings in Seistan. For the present, the agent at Birjand should be a native of Persia on moderate pay. A house could be rented for him in the city, so no expenditure on land or buildings would be necessary.

The other means by which, in my opinion, the profits of the branch could be increased have already been indicated in the part of this letter dealing with causes of past failure.

My recommendations may be summarised as under:—

1. The working capital of the branch should be increased.
2. Loans should not be refused if, in the opinion of the local Manager, the security offered is sufficient.
3. The Manager should be authorized to carry on an agency business for the supply of British Indian goods on the Russian deposit system.
4. A properly qualified agent should be appointed to Birjand.

The political aspect of the question, with special reference to 2 and 3 above, has been dealt with in my letters dated the 24th August, 1907, and the 31st January, 1908, to the Government of India.

[19140]

No. 224.

India Office to Foreign Office.—(Received June 3.)

THE Under-Secretary of State for India presents his compliments to the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and, by direction of Viscount Morley, forwards herewith, for the information of the Secretary of State, and with reference to the letter from the Foreign Office of the 28th ultimo, copy of a telegram to the Viceroy, dated the 29th ultimo, respecting the use of the German flag on dhows in the Persian Gulf.

India Office, June 2, 1908.

Inclosure in No. 224.

Viscount Morley to Government of India.

(Telegraphic.) P.

India Office, May 29, 1908.

DHOWS in Gulf flying German flag. Your telegram dated the 18th instant.

Pending receipt of Major Cox's promised report on use of British flag by Gulf dhows, no action will be taken here.

[19215]

No. 225.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received June 3.)

(No. 129.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Tehran, June 3, 1908.

POLITICAL situation.

On the 30th ultimo the Ministers resigned, and the formation of a new Cabinet is found to be very difficult. The Russian frontier question was the immediate cause of the Ministers' resignation.

The Enjumeens are demanding that the objectionable members of the *entourage* of the Shah, including Chapchal, may be dismissed, and are trying to intimidate the Kajars to bring pressure to bear on His Majesty in order to force him to yield to their demands. There is a wild report that the Shah has authorized the Russian Government to send troops into Persia, and this is the only ground for the present agitation which may develop.

[19303]

No. 226.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received June 3.)

(No. 130.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Tehran, June 3, 1908.

GERMAN school. Your telegram No. 103.

I am informed by Russian Minister that he has recently received instructions to concert with me with a view to taking joint action on this question.

M. de Hartwig adheres to the view reported in my despatch No. 91 of the 23rd April last, that joint representations are impossible in view of the dissimilarity of our respective positions. He is of opinion that the language he has used is sufficient, and that it is unnecessary and undesirable to warn the Persian Government in writing, as this would expose him to the obvious retort that all the customs receipts assigned to the Russian Bank are actually encashed by it.

We have not the right to encash receipts, and payments are constantly in arrear; the case is consequently different. We can insist with propriety, therefore, that British claims on assigned customs shall rank before all later charges, and that customs, except with our consent, shall in future not be pledged for fresh purposes.

If I addressed to the Persian Government a note in the above sense, it would be of use in preventing the payment of the German school subvention, and it might also have the effect of deterring the Persian Government from pledging, as security for advances from the German Bank, the surplus customs receipts.

Further, in view of the fact that feeling against Russia is running very high, I would rather deprecate joint action at the present moment.

[19209]

No. 227.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received June 3.)

(No. 131.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Tehran, June 3, 1908.

POLITICAL situation. My telegram No. 129 of to-day's date.

Last night Amis Bahadur Jang took bast at the Russian Legation. The Shah has been deserted by two or three other leading courtiers.

[19216]

No. 228.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received June 3.)

(No. 132.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Tehran, June 3, 1908.

SITUATION in Yezd.

The peasants in the neighbourhood, as a protest against the imposition of a new tax, have been in bast at the office of the Indo-European Telegraph Department for more than a fortnight, having forced their way into the garden and office. One or two have committed suicide, and the excitement is becoming dangerous. The Imperial Bank of Persia is now being threatened unless the doors are closed by the Manager in sympathy with their grievances.

I have made urgent and incessant representations to the Persian Government, but so far they and the Assembly have failed to calm the agitation, but they are now sending some officials to districts in question.

[18570]

No. 229.

Foreign Office to Mr. J. R. Preece.

Sir,

Foreign Office, June 3, 1908.

I AM directed by Secretary Sir Edward Grey to inform you that he has received a telegram from His Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires at Tehran reporting that the operators of your Syndicate have struck oil at 1,200 feet, which rises intermittently 75 feet above the level of the ground.

Mr. Marling's telegram is founded on a telegraphic report dated the 23rd ultimo from His Majesty's Consul-General at Bushire.

I am, &c.
(Signed) LOUIS MALLET.

[19258]

No. 230.

India Office to Foreign Office.—(Received June 4.)

Sir,

India Office, June 2, 1908.

IN reply to your letter, dated the 20th ultimo, as to the application which it is expected will shortly be made to the Persian Government on behalf of Messrs. Hadji Ali Akbar and Co. (Limited), of Manchester, for a Concession to extract red oxide on the Island of Sirri, I am directed to inclose copy of telegraphic correspondence with the Government of India on the subject.

Viscount Morley agrees with the Government of India that no protest need be entered against the proposed Concession by the Persian Government, provided, as proposed in Major Cox's telegram of the 16th April last and in your letter of the 21st April last, the firm guarantee that the Concession will be controlled as a British Company in British interests, and will not be transferred to nor shared in by foreigners.

Viscount Morley also agrees with the Government of India that it would be desirable to make a formal reservation of Jowasmi rights over the island, if this can be done without involving a protest against the action of the Persian Government.

I am, &c.
(Signed) A. GODLEY.

Inclosure 1 in No. 230.

Viscount Morley to Government of India.

(Telegraphic.) P.

India Office, May 13, 1908.

PLEASE refer to letter dated the 30th ultimo to the Foreign Office, forwarded with letter of the 1st instant, from Political Secretary, India Office, regarding a probable application for Oxide Concession in Sirri. I should be glad to have your views by telegraph on the question which has been raised, whether, in view of the present state of the controversy as to sovereignty over the island, assertion by Persian Government of any pretension to grant a Concession should be allowed to pass without a protest by His Majesty's Government.

Inclosure 2 in No. 230.

Government of India to Viscount Morley.

(Telegraphic.) P.

May 22, 1908.

SIRRI Island. Your telegram dated the 13th instant.

We would not recommend entering any protest against proposed Concession being granted, provided a guarantee in the terms suggested by the Resident in the Gulf is given by the manager of the firm. We think, however, that it would be desirable, in view of possible eventualities in the future, that a formal reservation of the Jowasmi claim should be made.

[19347]

No. 231.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received June 4.)

(No. 133.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Tehran, June 4, 1908.

SITUATION in Tehran.

This morning the Shah left the Palace and went with a strong escort to his country place, outside the Kasvin Gate.

The people are apprehensive, but the town remains quiet.

[19356]

No. 232.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received June 4.)

(No. 134.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Tehran, June 4, 1908.

POLITICAL situation.

M. de Hartwig was yesterday much alarmed for the safety of the Shah's person, who was left practically defenceless by yielding to the popular demands for the dismissal of Amir Bahadur and his guards. The agitation was entirely the work of the Enjumens, the Assembly standing quite aloof from it. The report mentioned in my telegram No. 129 of the 3rd instant has redoubled the hatred and mistrust felt by the Enjumens for the Shah.

Yesterday afternoon, at the Russian Minister's proposal, his Excellency and I called together on the Minister for Foreign Affairs, and later, on the Chief of the Kajar tribe. We pointed out to them that the Shah was unprotected against ignorant and uncontrolled political societies, and the dangerous consequences that might be the result. They both promised to do their best to calm the excitement.

The fact that the Shah has left town has reassured M. de Hartwig.

It is unquestionable that the agitation against the Shah has been fomented from Shiraz by Zil-es-Sultan.

[19303]

No. 233.

Sir Edward Grey to Mr. O'Beirne.

(No. 153.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Foreign Office, June 4, 1908.

YOU should inquire views of Minister for Foreign Affairs on paragraphs 1 and 2 of Mr. Marling's telegram No. 130 respecting the Persian customs.

[19399]

No. 234.

India Office to Foreign Office.—(Received June 5.)

(Confidential.)

Sir,

India Office, June 4, 1908.

I AM directed to acknowledge the receipt of your Confidential letter of the 6th ultimo, forwarding copy of correspondence with Mr. J. D. Rees, M.P., as to the action to be taken, in accordance with the Anglo-Russian Convention respecting Persia, for the advancement of British interests in the "neutral zone."

The points raised in Mr. Rees' Memorandum are covered by the inquiries of the Persian Sub-Committee of the Committee of Imperial Defence, and Viscount Morley has no special criticism of them to make. He would, however, remark that he agrees in the view that it would be undesirable at present for Messrs. Lynch to take steps for selling their Road Concessions in the "Russian zone" to Russia, and that the scheme, suggested by Sir G. Mackenzie to Sir C. Hardinge, for co-operation between the British and Russian banks, with a view to keep out financial intervention by a third Power, seems to deserve consideration, if there is any prospect of a practicable arrangement on the subject.

I am, &c.

(Signed) A. GODLEY.

[19398]

No. 235.

India Office to Foreign Office.—(Received June 5.)

Sir,

India Office, June 4, 1908.

WITH reference to your letter of the 2nd instant, I am directed by the Secretary of State for India to inform you that he concurs in the terms of the reply which

Sir E. Grey proposes to send to Mr. Marling's telegram of the 29th ultimo on the subject of certain incidents which have recently arisen in the Persian Gulf in connection with the irregular proceedings of launches of the Persian Customs Department.

I am, &c.

(Signed) A. GODLEY.

[19453]

No. 236.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received June 5.)

(No. 135.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Tehran, June 5, 1908.

SIRRI Red Oxide Concession. My telegram No. 102 of the 16th April last.

I am informed by the representative in Tehran of the firm in question that he has applied for Concession to the Persian Government. The reply of the Persian Government was that the "question of the island" was still being discussed.

The representative states that he is ready to apply through the British authorities to the Sheikh for the Concession. He fears other applications to the Persian Government, as the discovery of oxide is recent.

[19571]

No. 237.

Persian Transport Company to Foreign Office.—(Received June 6.)

3, Salter's Hall Court, Cannon Street, London,
June 5, 1908.

Sir,

IT is well known to you that for many years past this Company has been vainly endeavouring to obtain a site for the construction of buildings at Shellilieh, near Shushter. Numerous despatches have passed between ourselves and the Foreign Office on this subject, and His Majesty's Legation have consistently pressed our just claims upon the Persian Government.

In 1907 it was at last arranged between our local agents and two Persian gentlemen named Haji Seyed Muhammed and Agha Sheikh Murteza that they should lease to us a portion of the ground at Shellilieh which belonged to them. The lessors produced a deed showing their title to the ground; this deed was registered by His Majesty's Consul at Mohammerah, and an Agreement was signed on the 17th September, 1907, whereby the owners leased the ground to us. All the facts were submitted to our Legation in Tehran, and on the 10th February last His Majesty's Consul at Mohammerah wrote to our local agents to the effect that the Legation considered the ownership of the ground as unquestionable, and advised our proceeding with the buildings without delay.

This advice was faithfully followed by our local agents, but on the 14th ultimo our agents telegraphed to us that the Governor of Shushter, acting under instructions from the Persian Government, had compelled the builders to suspend the erection of the buildings.

This obstructive attitude on the part of the Governor has been notified by our local agents to His Majesty's Legation in Tehran, who, we understand, are taking up the matter with the Persian Government.

Our object in this despatch is to request you to telegraph to His Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires in Tehran, to whom our thanks are due for his persistent action in this matter, urging him to take what steps he properly can to secure that strict instructions shall be sent to the local Governor without delay to desist from obstructing the builders in their work.

I have, &c.

(Signed) H. W. MACLEAN, Secretary.

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[19398]

No. 238.

Sir Edward Grey to Mr. Marling.

(No. 107.)

(Telegraphic.) P.
PERSIAN Gulf.*Foreign Office, June 6, 1908.*

With reference to your telegram No. 127 of the 29th ultimo.

The Persian Government should be informed in writing that their Customs vessels do not possess any right of action within the territorial waters of any foreign State, unless such State has given express authorization by Convention, and that no vessels can be interfered with by them on the high seas, with the exception of those which sail under the Persian flag.

These principles of international law must be strictly adhered to by the Persian Government, and if there is any recurrence of incidents such as those reported by you, steps will be taken by His Majesty's Government with a view to putting a stop to them, in order to avoid the danger that Arab Chiefs might adopt measures of retaliation and to insure the preservation of the maritime peace of the Gulf.

At the present moment it seems unnecessary to raise the question of British sovereignty over Bassidu specifically, as some satisfaction has been obtained locally.

[19604]

No. 239.

Mr. G. Barclay to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received June 7.)

(No. 136.)

(Telegraphic.) P.
TURCO-PERSIAN frontier.*Constantinople, June 7, 1908.*

I have received the following two telegrams from His Majesty's Consul-General at Urumia:—

No. 33, dated the 27th ultimo, received the 7th instant:—

"According to the instructions of his Government, the Russian Vice-Consul, with Colonel Tumansky, has left to travel along the frontier.

"With reference to my telegram No. 32 of the 25th ultimo, it is probable that the Baranduz district will follow the example of the whole district south of Baranduz, which has offered submission to the Turks.

"Much excitement has been caused by recent events, and it might result in reprisals against the Sunnis."

No. 34, the 4th instant, received the 7th instant, reports the arrival of Tahir Pasha at Mawana.

[19605]

No. 239*.

Mr. O'Beirne to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received June 7.)

(No. 94.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

St. Petersburg, June 7, 1908.

M. ISVOLSKY states in an *aide-memoire*, of which copy is being sent by post, that it would be preferable to decline Messrs. Stevens' request to participate in Prince Imam Kuli's Concession, as a rigorous application of the Anglo-Russian Convention is an essential condition of the attainment of the ends which both parties to the Convention desire.

[19606]

No. 240.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received June 8.)

(No. 136.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Tehran, June 8, 1908.

SITUATION. My telegram No. 134 of the 4th June.

On Saturday morning an apparent reconciliation between the Shah and the popular party took place, but the next morning it was reported to His Majesty that a telegram had been sent to Zil-es-Sultan at Shiraz by the Enjumens asking him to come to Tehran and assume the Regency.

The same evening the Zil's eldest son, also Serdar Mansur, Ala-ed-Dowleh, and Azad-ul-Mulk, the head of the Kajar tribe, who took part in the agitation last week, were arrested by the Shah.

I fear that this action will redouble the agitation against the Shah, but the Russian Minister seems to think the situation thereby improved.

All the telegraph lines of the Indo-European Telegraph Company are down, and this has certainly been done by the Shah's orders.

Amir Bahadur Jang has left the Russian Legation.

[19674]

No. 241.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received June 9.)

(No. 108.)

Sir,

Tehran, May 2, 1908.

I HAVE the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your despatch No. 56 of the 14th ultimo, in which you were so good as to transmit to me a copy of a letter from the Persian Transport Company, dated the 18th March, in regard to the management and upkeep of the Bakhtiari road.

I should be grateful if the Company could be informed, with reference to the final paragraph of that letter, that the necessity for keeping the bridges in proper repair has never been questioned by this Legation.

I have, &c.
(Signed) CHARLES M. MARLING.

[19675]

No. 242.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received June 9.)

(No. 109.)

Sir,

Tehran, May 7, 1908.

I HAVE the honour to transmit herewith copy of a despatch from His Majesty's Consul-General at Bushire regarding the recent appointment of Messrs. Wöneckhaus' representative at Bushire to be the Consular Representative of Norway in that town. In this connection I may recall that last autumn a German subject, M. Bonati, was appointed Norwegian Consul-General for Persia.

I have, &c.
(Signed) CHARLES M. MARLING.

Inclosure in No. 242.

Consul-General Cox to Mr. Marling.

(No. 55. Confidential.)

Sir,

Bushire, April 12, 1908.

I HAVE the honour to inform you that early in the week some little flutter was caused in the town by the sight of a strange flag flying over the offices of M. Krumpeter, local representative of Messrs. Wöneckhaus. On examination, it proved to be the Norwegian emblem.

Norway does not figure at all either as a country of origin or destination in the trade statistics of Bushire, so that the appointment is clearly nothing more than a colourable one, brought about by Germany in order to strengthen the position and enhance the status of Messrs. Wöneckhaus' representative in Bushire.

In the circumstances, you may perhaps think fit to ask His Majesty's Government to consider the expediency of bringing about the appointment of Messrs. Gray Paul or Messrs. Ziegler's local managers as Consular Representative for Sweden or Japan, both of which countries send matches to Bushire, and, in the case of the latter country, I may mention that Japanese curiosity shops in Bombay from time to time send peddlars to Bushire to hawk goods, and that we have once or twice quite recently been called upon to give assistance to natives of that country.

I have, &c.
(Signed) P. Z. COX, Major,
British Resident in the Persian Gulf.

[19676]

No. 243.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received June 9.)(No. 110.)
Sir,*Tehran, May 7, 1908.*

WITH reference to my despatch No. 81 of the 14th April, I have the honour to transmit to you herewith copy of the reply which the Persian Government has sent to my most recent representations respecting the protection of Parsees in Persia.

I have, &c.
(Signed) CHARLES M. MARLING.

Inclosure in No. 243.

Mushir-ed-Dowleh to Mr. Marling.

(Translation.)

May 2, 1908.

I HAVE received your note respecting the Parsees in Persia. The Persian Government have always paid special attention to the welfare of this community, which are ancient subjects of Persia, and will continue to do so, as it has been seen in the case of Feraidun's murder.

In view of the representations made by you on the subject, the Minister of the Interior has been requested to draw the attention of the Governors to the fact.

[19679]

No. 244.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received June 9.)(No. 113.)
Sir,*Gulahek, May 20, 1908.*

AS I had the honour to report in my despatch No. 38 of the 26th February last, the Persian Government, after some little resistance, at length agreed to instruct the Director of the Mint to conclude a contract with the Imperial Bank of Persia for the coinage of silver to the value of 500,000 tomans. They, however, have since been making difficulties as to the price at which the operation should be executed.

Hitherto the bank's minting contracts have always been made at 105, i.e., for every 100 miscalis of silver delivered by the bank the Mint strikes coin to the face value of 105 kranis, a rate at which the bank was practically certain at any probable price of silver in Europe, or rate of exchange here, to suffer no loss, but rather to make a handsome profit. On the present occasion, however, the Government began by offering only 95 kranis for the 100 miscalis, a price at which the operation must practically result in a loss to the bank. I succeeded without much difficulty in getting this offer raised to 100, at which rate, Mr. Rabino informed me, the bank was, in existing conditions, practically secured against loss.

At this juncture, about the end of March, the Minister of Finance, under pressure from certain interested members of the Assembly, made changes in the personnel of the Mint of so unfortunate a kind that the Director, Moavin-ed-Dowleh, declined to be responsible any longer for the working of the establishment, and as a consequence minting operations stopped altogether. As the Imperial Bank of Persia had a considerable quantity of silver lying at the Mint, I was also obliged to inform the Persian Government that the Legation would hold them responsible for any loss which might result to the Imperial Bank of Persia on the change. This incident naturally entailed the suspension of negotiations for the contract, but, as soon as I received assurances from the Persian Government as to the safety of the bank's silver, I resumed them. Mr. Rabino, however, showed little disposition to assist me. According to him the bank had no particular need of coin, as its reserve was so large that he was actually exporting silver. His attitude appeared to be that the bank would be glad enough to make a contract at a good resultant profit, but that there was no immediate hurry and he was not, therefore, inclined to push the matter himself; but if the Legation could get the Persian Government to agree to any price about 100 he would be pleased to accept it. At length, however, Mr. Rabino received instructions from his Board which he considered empowered him to make a contract for 250,000

tomans firm at 100, and the remainder to be optional. I have consequently been doing my best to bring about an arrangement in that sense, but I am encountering a good deal of ill-will from the Minister of Finance.

I have, &c.
(Signed) CHARLES M. MARLING.

[19680]

No. 245.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received June 9.)(No. 114.)
Sir,*Gulahek, May 20, 1908.*

WITH reference to my despatch No. 90 of the 23rd ultimo on the subject of the proposed attachment of the customs receipts by the Russian Banque d'Escompte, I have the honour to submit some figures which I have obtained from the Russian Financial Agent as to the total claims of Russia on the customs receipts affected to the service of the Russian loans and advances:—

	Krans.
1. Service of the 1900 and 1902 loans, 1,670,294 r. 20 c., or taking the mean for 1906 to 1907 and 1907 to 1908	9,250,000
2. Service of Russian Bank's advances in current account, about 43,000 tomans per mensem	5,160,000
3. Pay of Cossack Brigade	2,230,000
4. Other claims	2,000,000
Total	18,640,000

As regards (1) I would observe that the "coupon" of 1,670,294 r. 20 c. includes the sum due on capital account, and that the request made by the Persian Government last August at the same time as that preferred to His Majesty's Government, for the suspension of the sinking fund for three years, has not, therefore, in fact been given effect to. Again, the amount of the Russian Bank's advances in current account to the Persian Government is believed to be 20,000,000 kranis, but the figures given in (2) as representing the sum required for the service of those advances would appear to indicate a far larger sum. I can only suggest as a possible explanation that, like the Imperial Bank of Persia, the Russian Bank has made large advances to private individuals on the guarantee of the Government. M. Ostrogradsky seemed little disposed to be communicative as to what (4) the "other claims" represent, but M. Bizot hopes to be able to examine all these matters shortly, and will furnish me with details.

It is, however, probable that the total arrived at (18,640,000 kranis) is not far from correct, and inasmuch as the total receipts of the customs affected to Russia, inclusive of those of Kermanshah, amounted in 1906-7 to 18,356,000 kranis, and last year to 20,629,000 kranis, there can remain but a small balance after Russian claims have been satisfied for the service of the Imperial Bank's advances. But, supposing the improbable to occur, and that last year's record receipts should be again realized, it is very doubtful whether the total of the Russian claims as given above will be encashed by the Russian Bank, for, as a matter of fact, the Persian Government, in defiance of the express stipulations of the loan contracts, succeed in diverting considerable sums from the customs receipts which should rightly be paid direct into the Russian Bank. Thus, for instance, the salaries of the Persian Frontier Commissioner at Urumia and of the Governor of Tabreez are made a charge on the Tabreez customs, and similar practices exist at other places.

In practice, therefore, the surplus available from the Kermanshah customs for the Imperial Bank of Persia is likely to be nil.

I have spoken with M. Mornard, the Administrator of the Customs, in this matter, and he assured me that he is quite ready to make an arrangement to secure the service of the bank's advances on the receipts of one of the Gulf ports.

The branch of the Russian Bank at Kermanshah not having yet been opened, Mr. Rabino has not thought it yet necessary to broach the matter with the Persian Government, although I urged that course on him, and until he does so, I could not properly take any action. I have therefore contented myself with acquainting Mr. Hawkins, a member of the Board who has recently arrived in Tehran armed with

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full powers to examine the position of the bank, with the situation, and he will no doubt see that the necessary steps are taken.

I have, &c.
(Signed) CHARLES M. MARLING.

[19681]

No. 246.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received June 9.)

(No. 115.)

Sir,

Gulahek, May 20, 1908.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 95 of the 23rd ultimo, I have the honour to report that few reliable details are obtainable here as to the recent incidents at Belyasevar, on the Russo-Persian frontier. The Russian Minister, however, informs me that his first account to the effect that the death of the Russian officer took place on Russian territory was incorrect, and that the incident really took place on the Persian side of the frontier, which the unfortunate officer had crossed with some of his men in pursuit of a runaway horse.

Mukhtar-es-Sultaneh, the recently appointed Governor of Tabreez, has proceeded to his post via Tiflis, and has reported to his Government that, as a result of his representations, the Viceroy of the Caucasus had agreed to send an officer of high rank to meet a Persian official in the neighbourhood of Belyasevar and make a joint inquiry into the whole case. M. de Hartwig, however, informs me that this account is entirely inaccurate, and that Count Voronzoff-Dashkoff had merely informed Mukhtar-es-Sultaneh that he was preparing a small force to drive the Persian tribesmen off the Russian part of the steppe, and, in particular, to expel the Shahsevens who had settled at Shahtakhteh.

I have, &c.
(Signed) CHARLES M. MARLING.

[19682]

No. 247.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received June 9.)

(No. 116.)

Sir,

Gulahek, May 20, 1908.

I HAVE the honour to report that on the 28th August last Messrs. Lynch's usual claim for reimbursement of the deficit on the running expenses of the steamship "Shushan" up to the 31st December, 1906, was presented to the Persian Government by this Legation.

On the 23rd October I received a reply from the Minister for Foreign Affairs on the subject, referring me to previous correspondence, and especially to a note of the 8th July, 1894, in which the Persian Government declined responsibility for any deficit in the working of the vessel.

In view of the instructions issued on the subject in Lord Kimberley's despatch to this Legation, No. 154 of the 20th November, 1894, that "although it may not be desirable, in the interests of the Company, to press their claim too strongly, it should not on that account be lost sight of, nor should the Persian Government be allowed to believe that their right to repudiate it is admitted by His Majesty's Government," I thought it well to address a note to the Minister for Foreign Affairs giving a brief outline of the case, and exposing the reasons for which the Company's claim was supported by His Majesty's Legation, copy of which I have the honour to inclose herewith.

I have recently received a reply from Mushir-ed-Dowleh (copy inclosed), and in view of the uncompromising attitude which his Excellency has seen fit to adopt in the matter, I thought it my duty to refer the matter to you, Sir, for instructions as to what further action I should take.

In a note, of which I have the honour to inclose a copy, I have informed Mushir-ed-Dowleh that the question is being referred to your Department, and drawn his Excellency's attention to two points in the statement made by Nizam-es-Sultaneh on the subject which do not appear to be borne out by the facts of the case.

I have, &c.
(Signed) CHARLES M. MARLING.

Inclosure 1 in No. 247.

Mr. Marling to Mushir-ed-Dowleh.

Your Excellency,

Tehran, January 20, 1908.

I HAVE the honour to remind your Excellency, with reference to your predecessor's note of the 23rd October last, that on the 25th January, 1895, the British Minister, acting on the instructions of the Secretary of State, explained, verbally and in full, to his Highness Amin-es-Sultan, at that time Sadr Azam, the reasons for which His Majesty's Government found themselves unable to admit the right of the Persian Government to repudiate their responsibilities in connection with the expenses of the steamship "Shushan."

It might, perhaps, be useful briefly to summarize the grounds on which the attitude of my Government was based, an attitude which they have since seen no reason to modify.

In reply to the contention of the Persian Government that they incurred no responsibility because no written guarantee was ever given to pay those expenses, and that if the steamer were handed over to them they would be able to run her without loss, it was pointed out that were such a course to be adopted it would not alter the fact that then for five years (and now for seventeen years) the cost of running the steamer had fallen upon the Company, who had worked the steamer belonging to the State to suit His Majesty's convenience.

His Majesty the Shah in the formal Arrangement of 1890 undertook that the steamer should work continually on the Upper Karun and in connection with the Company's steamers plying from Mohammerah to Ahwaz. It is hardly credible that if His Majesty, in calling upon a private English firm to carry out the duty which he intrusted to them, should have expected them to do so at their own expense. It was, moreover, a well-known principle of common equity that the principal is liable for the costs incurred by his agent in the conduct of his affairs.

As conclusive proof that Messrs. Lynch Brothers were, and are, acting in the matter as the agents of His Majesty the Shah, I would draw your Excellency's attention to the following facts:—

1. That it is evident, from a letter addressed to Messrs. Lynch by his Excellency Nizam-es-Sultaneh, then Governor of Arabistan, in 1894, that the Persian Government claim such profits as may remain after the working expenses have been defrayed.

2. That Nizam-es-Sultaneh, the Representative of the Persian Government, fixed the pay of the captain and engineer of the steamship "Shushan," and made arrangements with Messrs. Lynch and the merchants concerned as regards the rates of freight.

I feel confident that this review of the facts of the case will suffice to convince your Excellency of the validity of Messrs. Lynch's claim and that the Persian Government, in its spirit of justice, will not permit that a British firm should suffer severe pecuniary losses for having undertaken, at the request of the Persian Sovereign, and in the interests of the Persian State, an enterprise which has contributed to the commercial prosperity of this country.

I avail, &c.
(Signed) CHARLES M. MARLING.

Inclosure 2 in No. 247.

Mushir-ed-Dowleh to Mr. Marling.

(Translation.)

May 2, 1908.

I HAVE the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your note of the 20th January last respecting the income and expenditure of the steamship "Shushan." In reply, I have the honour to inform you that, as the contents of the note in question to a certain extent concerned his Excellency Nizam-es-Sultaneh, the Grand Vizier, the matter was referred to his Excellency who has sent me the following reply:—

"I was for several years Governor of Arabistan, and I used to go at least twice a year to Ahwaz. His Highness Ain-ed-Dowleh and his Excellency the Assef-ed-

Dowleh, have also been Governors of that province, and during that period the Persian Government have never interfered with the arrangements of the 'Shushan'; that is to say, if the ship had been handed over to the Persian Government, the Persian officials would have once a year examined the income and expenditure of the ship, and would have established an equilibrium. Not only will no document be found in any one's possession in connection with her alleged delivery to the Persian Government, but after a reference to the previous correspondence, the Legation will see that the Persian Government have at no time seen the accounts of the income and expenditure of this ship. If the ship had been handed over, no doubt the Persian Government would by this time have arranged about her income and expenditure and the account would have been inserted in one of the account books. This and other information is evidence as to the injustice of this claim."

Besides the above stated facts, I have the honour to refer you to the note of the Foreign Office, dated the 8th July, 1894, in which it was officially announced that if Messrs. Lynch did not receive the income and pay the expenses themselves the ship should be at once handed over to the officials of the Persian Government who would manage her themselves. This point was repeated in the note addressed in reply to the British Legation on the 2nd April, 1902. Since then, whenever the Legation reverted to this question, the Foreign Office referred your predecessors to the note of July 1894, and reminded them of the injustice of Messrs. Lynch's claim.

I have no doubt that after a reference to the previous correspondence addressed by the Foreign Office (to the Legation), you will, with your well-known sense of justice, give the necessary reply to Messrs. Lynch.

I avail, &c.
(Signed) MUSHIR-ED-DOWLEH.

Inclosure 3 in No. 247.

Mr. Marling to Mushir-ed-Dowleh.

Your Excellency,

Tehran, May 18, 1908.

I HAVE the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your Excellency's note of the 2nd instant in regard to the deficit in the running expenses in the steam-ship "Shushan," and, in view of the pronounced divergence of view which evidently exists on this subject between your Excellency's Department and this Legation, I have referred the whole matter to my Government for their instructions.

I take leave, however, in the meantime to call your Excellency's attention to two points in the statement of his Excellency Nizam-es-Sultaneh included in your above-mentioned note, which it is difficult to reconcile with the facts of the case as recorded in the Legation archives.

In the first place it is stated that during the period when his Excellency Nizam-es-Sultaneh, His Highness Ain-ed-Dowleh, and his Excellency Assef-ed-Dowleh were Governors of Arabistan, the Persian Government never interfered with the arrangements of the "Shushan"; and yet there is a letter addressed by Nizam-es-Sultaneh to Messrs. Lynch of the 14th Zilkade, 1311 (A.H.) stating that the Persian Government claim such profits as remain over after the expenses of the ship have been defrayed.

In the second place, as regards the statement that the Persian Government have at no time seen the account of the income and expenditure of the ship, I beg to remind your Excellency that Messrs. Lynch's claims, an examination of which would reveal the information mentioned, have been regularly presented to the Persian Foreign Office through His Majesty's Legation.

I avail, &c.
(Signed) CHARLES M. MARLING.

[19683]

No. 248.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received June 9.)

(No. 117.)

Sir,

Gulahek, May 20, 1908.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 12 of the 27th January last, I have the honour to transmit the accompanying copy of a despatch from His Majesty's Vice-Consul at Ahwaz, forwarding a statement brought up to the 3rd March, 1908, of Messrs. Lynch's account with the Bakhtiari Khans on account of the Ahwaz-Isfahan road.

The account has been examined and found correct, and in accordance with the bases adopted in the drawing up of the previous account forwarded in my above-mentioned despatch, and I have informed Captain Lorimer accordingly.

I have, &c.
(Signed) CHARLES M. MARLING.

Inclosure 1 in No. 248.

Vice-Consul Lorimer to Mr. Marling.

(No. 127. Confidential.)

Sir,

Ahwaz, March 17, 1908.

I HAVE the honour to inclose herewith a copy of a statement of the accounts between Messrs. Lynch Brothers and the Bakhtiari Khans, relating to construction of the road and to the repair of the bridges, and showing the amount due under both heads from the Khans on the 3rd March, 1908.

The statement of accounts was dated the 16th March, 1908, and was dispatched to them on the same day. I had previous to the 3rd March sent them notice of the new instalment, and of the interest on capital which fell due from them on that date.

I shall be obliged if you will signify to me as early as possible whether the statements of account now forwarded are correct or otherwise.

I have, &c.
(Signed) D. L. LORIMER.

Inclosure 2 in No. 248.

Statement of Lynch-Bakhtiari Accounts on March 3, 1908.

ROAD Construction Account.

Due from the Khans.		Credits to the Khans.	
	Kr.		Kr.
Arrears and instalment, &c., due on March 3, 1907	29,450.00	February 15, 1908— Paid through Oil Syndicate ..	12,465.14
Interest on above from March 3, 1907, to March 3, 1908, at 6 per cent.	1,767.41	March 2, 1908— Interest on above, seventeen days at 6 per cent.	31.83
March 3, 1908— 8th instalment due on date ..	11,000.00	March 3, 1908— Balance due from Khans ..	43,104.24
Interest due on balance of capital, 223,000 kranas, at 6 per cent.	13,380.00		
Total	55,604.21	Total	55,604.21

BRIDGE Repair Account.

Due from the Khans.		Credits to the Khans.	
	Kr.		Kr.
March 3, 1907—			
Balance due on date	18,476.36	Nil.	
March 3, 1908—			
Interest due on above for one year at 6 per cent.	1,108.58	March 3, 1908—	
		Balance due from Khans ..	19,584.94
Total	19,584.94	Total	19,584.94

NOTES.

1. This bridge account does not include the charges for the repair of the bridges in 1907, amounting to 4,477.08 krans, which the Khans have promised to pay. If necessary it will be added to this statement of account later. This has been noted on the vernacular copy of the bill sent to the Khans.

2. The above statements of account were forwarded under date of the 16th March, 1908, to the Khans, with the request that they would arrange to settle them by payment.

(Signed) D. L. R. LORIMER, *Captain, Indian Army,*
His Britannic Majesty's Vice-Consul for Arabistan.

Ahwaz, March 16, 1908.

[19684]

No. 249.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received June 9.)

(No. 118.)

Sir,

Tehran, May 20, 1908.

IN accordance with the authorization conveyed to me in your telegram No. 78 of the 11th ultimo, I consulted the Russian Minister on the question of broaching to the Persian Government the proposed exchange of the respective control of the British and Russian Telegraph Departments on the Tehran-Meshed and Khaf-Nasratabad telegraph lines, and after some deliberation it was agreed that we should request Mr. Barker and General Heisler to inform the Persian Telegraph Administration of the proposal.

After consultation between these gentlemen, the matter was accordingly broached to the Persian Telegraph Administration by the latter verbally, and by Mr. Barker in a letter dated the 30th April, the draft of which I had previously shown to M. de Hartwig. A day or two later M. de Hartwig told me that he had hopes that the matter would go through without difficulty, as when the Sartip (General Heisler) had mentioned it to his Persian colleague no objections had been raised. I said that Mr. Barker, whose long experience with the Persian Telegraph Administration should give his opinion considerable weight, had also been sanguine of success, but for myself I was not so confident, as I feared the inveterate suspicion of the Persians of anything like joint action by the two Legations, and I doubted whether the Persian Telegraph Administration would take the responsibility of acquiescing in the exchange without the sanction of the Ministers. In any case, the rôle for us to assume was one of complete disinterestedness, leaving the whole matter to the two Telegraph Superintendents. The same afternoon Mr. Barker received a reply, dated the 2nd May, from Assadullah Mirza stating that the matter was one of too great importance for his decision, and that it should be treated by the two Legations with the Minister for Foreign Affairs.

The Ministerial crisis which occurred at this moment made any further action impossible, but on the reconstruction of the Cabinet it was agreed upon between M. de Hartwig and myself that we should mention the matter verbally to Mushir-ed-Dowleh at an early opportunity. The appearance of a somewhat violent article in the Medjliss newspaper on the 18th instant representing Great Britain and Russia as treating Persia with scant ceremony in arranging such a question without first consulting her, furnished me with a pretext for bringing up the question, and when I saw Mushir-ed-Dowleh the following day I asked him why so much animosity should be displayed against a perfectly innocent proposal, and one which certainly could not

possibly do Persia any harm. His Excellency said he had not seen the article, nor had he yet heard of the proposal that Russia and Great Britain should exchange the obligations they had assumed in respect of the telegraph lines, but the tone of it was of course the expression of the popular belief that the Anglo-Russian Agreement was only the first step towards the partition of the country. I said that I hoped his Excellency would do what he could to dispel these absurd notions, and represent the present suggestion in its true light. The Indo-European Telegraph Department had for the past few years taken on itself the maintenance of the Tehran-Meshed line at a cost considerably in excess of the Persian contribution, and now that they proposed to make a change which, while throwing no additional burden on the Persian Telegraph Administration, was one of considerable convenience to themselves, they were being accused of discourtesy, if not of far worse motives. What could it matter to the Persian Government whether the small staff required to keep the line in order was composed of English or Russians? I hoped his Excellency would see that the matter was arranged between the Telegraph Administrations concerned, and save himself and me from a wearisome discussion over a matter which neither of us was so competent to deal with as the experts.

His Excellency, whose conversation betrayed that in spite of his denial he had previous knowledge of Mr. Barker's letter, said he would look into the matter and tell me his views when I next saw him.

I have, &c.
(Signed) CHARLES M. MARLING.

[19685]

No. 250.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received June 9.)

(No. 119.)

Sir,

Gulahek, May 21, 1908.

I HAVE the honour to transmit herewith the usual monthly summary of events in Persia for the past four weeks.

I have, &c.
(Signed) CHARLES M. MARLING.

Inclosure in No. 250.

No. 5.—*Monthly Summary of Events in Persia.*

Tehran.

ON the whole, the situation at Tehran during the last four weeks has been quieter than usual. There is undoubtedly a feeling of considerable depression among the public, and it is recognized by the more intelligent Persians that the machinery of Government is now practically dislocated. The general public, however, still have an exaggerated faith in their "Constitution," which has unfortunately already shown signs of corruption.

The question which attracted the greatest attention during the period under review was the Finance Minister's so-called "Budget" presented to the House by him in person on the 25th April, in which he proposed to increase the duties on tea and sugar for the purpose of re-establishing financial equilibrium. A reference to paragraph 5 of Monthly Summary No. 13 of 1907 will show that Sani-ed-Dowleh's original scheme was to devote the increased tax to railway construction. Mr. Marling's language to the Finance Minister in connection with his premature statement to the House as to the attitude of His Majesty's Government towards his scheme, and the suggestion that the Persian Government should consult their Financial Adviser, M. Bizot, have given rise to much discussion in the Assembly, in the press, and among the general public. The Finance Minister even went so far as to give out that when the Ministry resigned on the 2nd May it was in consequence of the hostility of the British Legation towards his policy. The question was discussed in the House the same day, and it was stated that the Cabinet had resigned "in order to safeguard their policy." As a matter of fact, they resigned because of internal dissensions, but the Finance Minister, by his tactics, succeeded in gaining a certain amount of public applause.

In anticipation of the Shah's birthday on the 15th May, a very conciliatory Rescript was addressed by His Majesty to the Assembly the previous day, which brought about the expected reaction of feeling in favour of the Shah. The usual celebrations took place, in marked contrast to the hostile demonstrations of last year due to an openly reactionary policy.

The Cabinet resigned on the 2nd May, and was reappointed on the 6th May, with the alteration of Mustaufi-ul-Mamalek in place of Zafar-es-Sultaneh as War Minister. In consequence, however, of the Premier's resignation again on the 16th May, a further redistribution of posts is imminent.

Nizam-es-Sultaneh, who had become exceedingly unpopular, fled to Kum on the 17th May. He made an attempt while still in office to obtain the governorship of Khorassan.

On the 16th May the Shah addressed a very cordial personal telegram to the Nasr-ul-Mulk, who is travelling in Europe, inviting him to return to Persia as Prime Minister, but it is considered doubtful whether his Excellency will avail himself of the offer.

On the 26th April a weekly newspaper published at Tehran, entitled the "Musavat," published a violent personal attack on the Shah containing language of a most abusive character. A feeble attempt was made to prosecute the editor, but the matter was eventually dropped. The following quotations are taken from the article in question:—

"The only ambition that our nominal Sovereign has in his head is to prepare in the best and easiest way he can all the necessities that his lusts command, and to surround himself by a number of notorious advisers and companions; to drink with them till late at night; to end his nights in debauchery, and to do in the morning as his lusts dictate; in fact, to act as he desires without responsibility and without fear. The only obstacles to these pleasures of his, as he thinks, are the existence of a Constitution and of a National Assembly, which obstacles he has made up his mind to remove from his path. Stranger still is his idea that the removal of these obstacles could be realized by doing away with a few Deputies or a few Mollahs or a few great orators, or a few writers. Nay, what ignorance! Is it not the bounden duty of every individual Persian to support and maintain the Constitution? Do not lose your throne for nothing. No powerful Sovereign has ever been benefited by fighting with his people."

The Exchange of Telegraphs has been adversely criticized in the Tehran press, as reported in a separate despatch, and much space has been devoted to the Finance Minister's increased taxation scheme and the supposed attitude of Great Britain towards it, as recorded above.

Seven prisoners escaped a few days ago from the police cells, including two men implicated in the murder of the Parsee merchant Feridoon. Two of these prisoners were recaptured shortly afterwards by members of the Enjumens. The Chief of Police was tried in public and severely censured for his negligence.

Two persons who had shown active hostility to the reform movement were condemned to long terms of imprisonment, after a form of trial had been gone through at the Courts of Justice. One of them had been guilty of sticking up posters declaring that most of the members of the Assembly were Babis.

(Signed) G. P. CHURCHILL,
Oriental Secretary.

May 21, 1908.

Astrabad.

Mr. Rabino, His Majesty's Vice-Consul at Resht, arrived at Astrabad on tour on the 17th April. During his stay he carefully investigated and settled a large number of claims and charges brought by Kurramis against the British Agent there. His conclusion was that most of the charges and claims were only part of an intrigue to get the British Agent into trouble. Mr. Rabino returned to Resht on the 15th May.

Meshed.

1. On the 17th April, Captain Battye, I.M.S., handed over charge as Medical Officer to Captain Franklin, I.M.S., and left for Europe.

2. There has been much friction between the Local Assembly and the municipality. There appears to be a gradual weakening of authority, but the town is quiet.

Tabreez.

1. On the 15th May 200 Persian Cossacks arrived from Soujboulak.
2. The new Governor-General, Mukhber-es-Sultaneh, who left Tehran some time ago for his post, via Tiflis, should have reached Tabreez by now.

Turbat-i-Hayderi.

1. The feeling against the Local Assembly has proved too much for that body. All the members joined in a Petition to the Governor-General to appoint a Governor for the district. All classes unite in condemning the existing state of affairs and express themselves hopeless of obtaining any benefit from "constitutional" rule.
2. A new Russian doctor arrived during April at Karez and relieved Dr. Shiryaev of the Sanitary Cordon. The latter left for Pul-i-Khatun.
3. Two bands of robbers which had infested the Tabbas district were dispersed during April.

Ispahan.

1. Mr. Grahame arrived from Shiraz on the 13th May and took over his duties on appointment as Consul-General at Ispahan.
2. The Ispahan Municipality endeavoured to raise money for various municipal reforms by levying octroi duties. The merchants objected and the attempt failed. The municipality is now in a moribund condition and there is talk of new elections to revive it.

Yezd.

1. Serdar Motazid, the new Governor of Kerman, met on the 7th April near Anar a party of forty robbers who were carrying off 1,200 sheep and much plundered property. He attacked the robbers, killing eight of them and compelled them to abandon their booty. His own casualties were one man killed and one man wounded.
2. The Entezam-ul-Mulk arrived at Yezd from Nain on the 20th April on appointment as Governor.
3. On the 14th May some 2,000 villagers assembled outside the British telegraph office demanding permission to take sanctuary as a protest against the collection of certain taxes. The bazaars were closed, and the situation seemed serious. Mr. Blackman, Acting British Vice-Consul, conferred with the leaders of the crowd, which then went off to the mosques and shrines. The next day the crowd returned, and clamoured for British assistance to get them justice. Mr. Marling telegraphed that assurances would shortly be sent by the National Assembly. This soothed the crowd, but a telegram from the Finance Minister was considered unsatisfactory. On the 18th May a deputation of tradesmen waited on Mr. Blackman asking for sanctuary, as owing to a further large influx of villagers they were fearful for the safety of their shops. Mr. Blackman persuaded them to wait two days for a reply from the National Assembly. On the 19th May a deputation from the leader of the agitation called, and stated that large numbers of villagers, many of them armed, continued to come in, and a very great sense of insecurity prevailed. They feared that these men might break into lawlessness if a reply were long delayed. Some of the crowd came, and, in their disappointment at getting no reply and not being allowed into the office, threatened to tear down the flag and break up the office. The deputation apologized for these threats. Mr. Marling called on the Minister for Foreign Affairs, to whom he represented the seriousness of the case, and received promises from him that the grievances of the people of Yezd would receive redress.

Seistan.

1. Two Hindoos suspected of adultery, having been ill-treated by a mob in Nasretabad—when they narrowly escaped being killed—His Majesty's Consul demanded the punishment of the ringleaders of the mob. The matter was settled by the deportation of three Seyeds and the flogging of six other offenders.
2. The Karguzar wrote officially to His Majesty's Consul protesting against the planting and building at Kacha and Piran, which he alleged to be in Persian territory. The Consul replied that the question was not within his cognizance as Consul.

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3. The Shaukat-ul-Mulk is in treaty for the purchase of the Seistan revenue grain, and has asked for a loan of 10,000 tomans in the event of his buying it.

4. The Shaukat-ul-Mulk was recently presented with the Shah's portrait. Mr. Howson and Dr. Kosminsky were present at the ceremony. Mr. Howson reports that he was given precedence over the Russian doctor, and that the band played the British national anthem.

Kerman.

1. Serdar Motazid, the new Governor, arrived on the 24th April. He appeared to have definite instructions to guide him, and brought with him a Chief Justice, to whom he ordered all cases to be referred. He ordered the policing of the town by soldiers, of whom he intended to have some 700 always in the town. The Adil-es-Sultan having entered the town, his opponents, the Naib and Nazim, threatened to cause a riot. They went to the Governor, who referred the matter to the Chief Justice, and warned both parties to keep to constitutional methods.

2. The Russian Consul at Kerman employs as munshi a Persian, who is a leading figure in local politics. The new Governor has complained of him to His Majesty's Consul.

Kermanshah.

1. The district round Kermanshah appears to be much disturbed owing to the tribes being on the move. Mr. and Mrs. Stead, of the American Mission, were recently robbed of all their belongings about 25 miles east of the town.

2. Zafar-es-Sultaneh, ex-Minister of War, has been appointed Governor, and is now on his way to Kermanshah. In the meantime the town appears to be in disorder, and His Majesty's Consul reports that there are no authorities to whom he can make representations.

Shiraz.

1. The Zil-es-Sultan arrived at Shiraz early in May and has sent several telegrams to His Majesty's Legation stating that he had already taken strong measures to preserve order. There was a disturbance in the town just before his Highness arrived arising out of the publication of a telegram from the great priests of Nejef regarding the murder of Kavam-ul-Mulk, but since the Zil-es-Sultan's arrival matters have been quieter.

2. Three hundred of the Charmahal Regiment, forming part of the Zil-es-Sultan's escort, arrived on the 26th April.

3. Three servants of Dr. Wollatt were robbed and stripped on the 26th April after dark near the town by three horsemen. The latter have not yet been traced.

4. A telegram, dated the 17th May, from the Assistant Superintendent, Indo-European Telegraph Department, Shiraz, reported that Arab tribesmen were committing depredations between Sivend and Dehbid, and damaging the telegraph line.

PERSIAN GULF.

Bushire.

1. The Local Assembly called upon the Director of Customs to present himself before it for examination in connection with the bastinading of the Armenian Customs clerk (see last summary). The Director is said to have refused, as he declined to acknowledge the Assembly as an authorized institution. The Assembly is much enraged at his attitude.

2. Reports having reached Bushire that the Khans of Borazjun, Shabancara, &c., had combined to force caravans to use the Ahmedi-Mashila route, the Local Assembly addressed the Khans protesting against their action, and saying that caravans were free to use either route. The Khans were said to have accepted the Assembly's contention and both routes (Ahmedi-Mashila and Shif) were being used. Much intrigue, however, was on foot, and muleteers, who preferred the Shif route as shorter and because supervision over goods by consignees is impossible, had been put up to petition against the Ahmedi route.

3. Mr. Krumpeter, the local representative of Messrs. Wöckhaus and Co., early in April notified his appointment as Vice-Consul for Norway.

4. The Deputy Governor recently detained eleven passengers suspected of smuggling

arms. Certain quarantine employees were suspected of being in collusion with the smugglers, and the Customs proposed to post a guard at the quarantine station to prevent smuggling.

5. The Passport Officer received instructions about the 15th April from Tehran not to issue passports to pilgrims wishing to proceed to Kerbela.

Bunder Abbas.

1. The National Assembly has informed the people of Bunder Abbas that their request to be allowed to have a Local Assembly instead of sending representatives to the Bushire Assembly cannot be granted.

2. Hajji Mirza Abdul Mohammed, editor of the Cairo "Chehra Nema," left for Bombay on the 25th March.

3. The Customs launch "Tehrani" recently conveyed the Director of Customs, the agent of the Muin-et-Tujjar, and the (Persian) agent of the Hamburg-America Line to Dulab, where they visited the sulphur quarries worked by the Muin-et-Tujjar. His Majesty's Consul states that the visit would not itself be significant were it not for the fact that the parties concerned have studiously tried to conceal it.

Ahwaz.

The general alarm at the prospect of poor crops led early in March to some undesirable incidents, an agent of the Oil Syndicate, some muleteers escorted by two Indian sowars, and Lieutenant Wilson being in turn molested by Lurs. In each case the ground of complaint was the purchase of barley. Captain Lorimer is of opinion that there is plenty of grain in the district. He has informed the Khans of these incidents and renewed his demands for more guards.

(Signed) C. B. STOKES, Major,
Military Attaché.

[19686]

No. 251.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received June 9.)

(No. 120. Secret.)

Sir,

Tehran, May 21, 1908.

I HAVE the honour to transmit herewith diaries of the Military Attaché at Meshed Nos. 16, 17, and 18.

I have, &c.
(Signed) CHARLES M. MARLING.

Inclosure 1 in No. 251.

No. 16.—Diary of Military Attaché, Meshed, for week ending April 18, 1908.

Summary of News.

(Secret.)

LIEUTENANT-GENERAL EVREINOV has arrived in Askabad and taken over charge of Transcaspia.

2. Our Termez agent makes some instructive remarks on the Russian view of the obligations imposed on the British by the new Convention.

The Termez troops are engaged in making field fortifications and entrenchments on the very bank of the Amu Darya (Termez fort stands a good way back from the bank) wherever a crossing is feasible. This is probably only to practise the troops at such work, but it is likely to cause a good deal of comment on both sides of the river.

3. The new Governor of Samarkand is dealing a terrible blow to Russian departmental red tape: he has found out that a large part of the equipment of the troops under his command is unserviceable, and has ordered fresh equipment to be made up locally on payment, instead of indenting for it as usual.

4. Sarakhs reports the return to Russia from Persia via Tejen of the notorious Afghan imposter Din Muhammed. This is the same "Sirdar" Muhammed Khan, who

two or three years ago, passed himself off on the Viceroy of the Caucasus and the Governors of Baku and Batoum as a near relative of the Ameer Abdurrahman, and ex-Commander-in-chief of the Afghan army, and was received with banquets, artillery salutes, &c.

5. The "Transcaspian Review" says that a canal from the Amu Darya to the Murghab River will be taken in hand shortly. This project has been mentioned several times previously by our Charjui and Merv correspondents and would no doubt be a work of great utility; but it would be a task of such magnitude that I doubt the Russians taking it in hand for some time to come, as the Tejen and Murghab irrigation construction works are keeping their irrigation engineers fully employed.

In any case, it is satisfactory to note that the Russians are turning their attention nowadays to the peaceful development of Turkestan by canals and irrigation works, rather than to the construction of unprofitable strategic railways.

"Transcaspian Review."

April 5.—The Chimion oil consists of:—

	Per cent.
Light benzine	2
Heavy "	5
Kerosene	46
Residue (Octatkn)	44
Total	97

The flash point is 140° celsius.

Although the appointment of General Belyavski as Governor-General of Turkestan has been officially announced, the newspaper "Kolokol" still maintains that Lieutenant-General Kondratovich will be appointed Governor-General.

On the 2nd April, near the station of Adji Kabul on the Caucasus Railway, a goods train was derailed; four men were injured, ten waggons smashed to pieces and twenty waggons damaged.

April 8.—It is proposed to begin work shortly on a canal from the Amu Darya to Merv or to the River Murghab. This canal will water 500,000 dessateens of land.

April 9.—At the Military Council of the 27th March it was decided to raise the pay of the officers of the active army and of the doctors doing duty with it, as follows:—

	Roubles.
Pay of Sub-Lieutenant to be raised	15
" Lieutenant to be raised	20
" Captain to be raised	30
" Captain of four years in the grade to be raised	40
" Lieutenant-Colonel to be raised	40
" Doctors to be raised	20-60*

This will involve an addition of 15,000,000 roubles to the Military Budget.

"Turkestanskiya Vedomosti."

April 8.—On the 31st March Lieutenant-General Evreinov arrived in the district to which he has been appointed (Transcaspia.)

Askabad Report.

March 25.—A fight took place in the market place between a party of artillerymen and some of the townspeople, in the course of which a Turk cut off an artilleryman's hand with a large knife.

March 28.—One hundred and ten boxes rifle ammunition taken out of the magazine and sent E.

Nowadays every train (except mail trains) passing E. has at least two trucks full of wooden sleepers.

Sarakhs Report.

April 8.—An Afghan who called himself "Sirdir" Din Muhammed arrived here from Meshed via Persian Sarakhs. He was decorated with six medals and gave himself

* According to length of service.

out as an important refugee from Herat. He was received (*i.e.*, received with respect as a visitor.—H. S.) by the Governor and given two mounted soldier orderlies to accompany him to Tegen.

The river is full and the water still rising.

There are no Cossacks or artillerymen here now, only the infantry battalion and the details of frontier guard, &c.

Merv Report.

March 31.—Two hundred men of the 2nd Artillery Brigade left E. These were not time-expired men or recruits.

April 1.—One hundred men of the 4th Battery 2nd Artillery Brigade came in from W.

April 2.—Eighty men of the Kushk Reserve Battalion came in from Kushk and left E. These were not time-expired men.

April 3.—One hundred Kuban Cossacks passed through W.

April 4.—Five waggons full of horses came in from W. accompanied by ten men of the Kavkaz Cossack regiment.

April 5.—Fifty men of the Merv Reserve Battalion left by Kushk train.

April 6.—Two hundred Kavkaz Cossacks left by special Kushk train.

Several murders have been committed this week, and a number of houses robbed. The Russians are making great efforts to break up these bands of robbers, but without any apparent success; they have only succeeded in making it very difficult for harmless people like me to move about at all.

The garrison of Merv now numbers about 4,000 men; this includes 400 Cossacks.

Termez Report.

March 30.—None of the steamers that have arrived here lately have had any ammunition or other Government stores on board.

No supplies for the troops have come in by steamer, as there is said to be famine in Russia, and so all supplies required this year are to be purchased locally. Active measures are being taken to get in the required amount of supplies to replenish the "godowns" for this year. The amounts required are said to be:—

	Pouls.
Wheat } altogether	225,000
Flour }	
Barley }	
Rice	30,000
Fodder	75,000

There are of course large amounts of last year's supplies still stored here.

According to the Russians, the Ameer of Afghanistan has not accepted the terms of the Convention, and is much displeased at it. The Russians say this does not matter; they have come to terms with the British, and, if the Ameer refuses to receive Russian commercial agents and to open his country to trade, the joint English and Russians will force him to do so.

The infantry battalions have for the last month been camped a week at a time (*i.e.*, one battalion staying there one week) with parties of engineers and artillery at the different places on the Amu Darya bank near Termez where the river could be crossed.

These troops have been constructing trenches, breastworks (or ramparts), gun-pits (or épaulements), and other field fortifications to resist a hostile landing or to cover an advance across the river.

A party of 160 selected officers, non-commissioned officers, and men, has been sent out into the district to enumerate and register all the horses, ponies, camels, and donkeys available for transport work if required.

Samarkand Report.

April 4.—The Governor of Samarkand has made a thorough inspection of the soldiers' equipment and has condemned a large amount of it as totally unfit for service. Instead of indenting for fresh equipment in the usual manner, he said that the articles were urgently required and sent for the contractors, merchants, etc., who deal in such goods and ordered them all locally to be supplied on payment.

It is said here that the three rifle battalions are under orders for service. This,

with the unusual procedure in the matter of equipment, is evoking much comment, though it is not clear if these preparations are directed against the Osmanlis or Afghans or, perhaps, against both.

Two Russian officers of rank, accompanied by a railway engineer, and an escort of ten mounted men, have gone to inspect the different projected routes for the construction of the Amu Darya Railway, i.e., the various different routes for taking the railway to Termez from Juma, Kermene, &c.

April 6.—Twelve boxes rifles in 2 carts and 168 boxes rifle ammunition in 14 carts left for Termez, escorted by 10 men of the Fortress Company.

(Signed) H. SMYTH, Captain,
Military Attaché.

Mesher, April 18, 1908.

Inclosure 2 in No. 251.

No. 17.—*Diary of Military Attaché, Mesher, for week ending April 25, 1908.*

Summary of News.

(Secret.)

1. Our Sarakhs correspondent reports a project for laying some of the narrow gauge railway, which is stored at Kushk, from Tejen to Sarakhs, as was done in the case of the Feroza Railway. Some time ago it was proposed to replace the Tejen detachment of the 1st Railway Battalion by a detachment of the Kushk Railway Company, which somewhat confirms this report. But there are no present indications of this railway being begun.

2. The Pontoon Company's store-sheds at Termez have again been damaged by the water of the Surkhan River. Our agent says that, unless immediate steps are taken to divert the course of the Surkhan River, great damage will be done to other Russian buildings there.

3. The Transcaspian Review has accounts of the movements of Cossacks and Turkoman cavalry against robbers near Merv, which confirm our Merv correspondent's continual reports of the depredations by bands of robbers in that neighbourhood.

4. Another severe order has been issued by the General Officer Commanding Turkestan Army, dealing with the lack of discipline and military spirit in the army; the particular subject of the order being the poor resistance shown by military guards at Samarkand and Charjui when attacked by armed robbers. Incidentally, this order confirms our Charjui agent's account (see Diary No. 13) as compared with the newspaper account of the affair published at the time.

"Transcaspian Review."

April 15.—Orders dated the 11th March: "Having arrived in Askabad, I have taken over the Transcaspian Province.—(Signed) EVREINOV."

In view of the expected speedy arrival incognito of the Assistant Minister of Ways and Communications, General von Vendrikh, for the revision of railway defects, an inventory of all defects on the (C.A.) railway is being taken by the officials concerned.

The Chief Directorship of Railways has ordered that employés who come late to work, or who leave before the proper time, shall be reprimanded six times and then dismissed the service.

On the 7th April, a commando of one officer and thirty Cossacks was dispatched from Askabad by rail to catch a band of robbers operating round the stations of Dort-Kuiu and Jujukli.

On the 27th March a detachment of Jigits (Turkoman cavalry), who were sent to intercept robbers driving off cattle near the station of Jujukli, caught a robber and sixteen stolen camels out of sixty stolen from a Persian subject. This occurred at Sakar-Chah, 25 versts from Merv.

April 16.—On the 1st April, at the Takta Bazar Cossack post, a soldier of the frontier guard sold his rifle to an Armenian, who sold it to a Turkoman. The rifle has been found and the guilty ones arrested.

April 17.—General Evreinov, with his staff and the engineers, inspected the karezes and water supply of Askabad. He also interviewed a gathering of Turkomans, to whom he made a speech, praising them for their loyalty to the Tsar.

By an Imperial Ukase, a Committee of the Senate, under Senator Count Palen, is to inspect Turkestan, to see if it is fit to be brought under the Minister of the Interior, like the rest of Russia.

April 18.—Turkestan Army Orders by Lieutenant-General Kondratovich acting Commander Turkestan Army:—

"Whereas on the night of the 17th November, 1907, evil disposed persons tied up a guard of the 2nd Railway Battalion, posted at Samarkand station, and went off with the treasure entrusted to the guard; and again, on the 8th March, 1908, a similar case occurred, when armed robbers tied up a guard of the 17th Turkestan Battalion posted on Charjui Treasury, and carried off the treasure; so this is the second occasion when a military guard has misconducted itself in not defending the treasure entrusted to it. I do not admit any excuse in such cases. A guard must defend its trust to the last drop of its blood. These are indelible stains on the honour of the Turkestan Army, which, moreover, furnish proofs of the incorrect attitude of the immediate military Chiefs of the offenders, as the guards were placed under arrest only by my orders. This furnishes proof of the rottenness of their training and military spirit, and for this I lay the blame on their Colonels. I allot the following punishments:—

"The companies from which these guards came are to be broken up, the men distributed among other battalions of their brigade, and the companies reformed from the men of other battalions.

"The feldvebels and under-officers of these companies, will be degraded a step, and those who have completed their time of service must retire at once.

"Captain Zub, commanding 2nd Company 17th Turkestan Battalion to be dismissed from command of a company.

"Colonel Mikhailov, 17th Turkestan Battalion, to be reprimanded for the disorder in his corps.

"All the rank and file who submitted to be tied by robbers are to be tried by court-marshal, and the Commander of the Guard is to be reduced to the ranks before trial.

"This order to be read to all companies, squadrons, and batteries in all commands of the Turkestan Army."

"Turkestanskiya Vedomosti."

April 16.—The O. C. artillery has sanctioned the issue of a few rifles, with the necessary ammunition, to the Department of Agriculture, to arm the guards of the experimental farms in Andijan and the Hungary Steppe (Goladnaya).

Captain Korlov, station-master of Tashkent, has died of a revolver wound received on the 7th April.

Sarakhs Report.

April 12.—Ten Kavkaz Cossacks came in from Pul-i-Khatun and went on to Tejen.

There are no Cossacks or artillery here now, only the infantry, and details as before reported.

The river is in flood now.

It is now said here that the Russians intend to connect Sarakhs with Tejen by a narrow gauge railway, using for this purpose some of the narrow gauge rolling-stock and material that is stored in Kushk fort.

Termez Report.

April 8.—A party of officers came in from Samarkand this week, including the Commander of (this section of) the Frontier Guard and the Commander of the Pontoon Company.

I previously reported the damage done to the Pontoon Company's barracks and stores near the Surkhan River. Now the Surkhan is in high flood again, and another store has been carried away. The water is still rising, and it is feared that a block of newly-constructed officers' quarters will be carried away unless early and energetic steps are taken to protect them.

Reports to this effect were sent to Tashkent, and two special engineers have come from Samarkand (with the party of officers above referred to) to go into the matter.

These engineers have discovered that the course of the Surkhan River is being

gradually diverted from its proper bed by Uzbek cultivators (on the left bank of the Surkhan) who have for years past been reclaiming and protecting by "bands" part of the old bed of the Surkhan, and thereby forcing the river bit by bit to encroach on the sandy ground where the Russians built their pontoon barracks, &c.

This reclaimed land in the Surkhan River bed is called Joo-Jungle (joo=water course). The Uzbeks have now reclaimed 6 square versts right in the river bed: this is very fertile soil and is covered with gardens growing splendid fruit and vegetables. The two engineers have surveyed all this bed and say that it is absolutely necessary for a strong dam to be made at once to turn the Surkhan River back into its former bed, otherwise the river will still further change its course and will do immense damage to other buildings on the Russian side. This readmission of the Surkhan to its old bed involves the complete destruction of all the Joo-Jungle gardens: the proprietors of these gardens have been offered their choice of the following terms:—

- (a.) Compensation for the loss of their gardens.
- (b.) Land on the other (right) bank of the Surkhan, with free seed and every assistance to begin cultivation.

The proprietors of the gardens have absolutely refused to accept these terms for their gardens; but the matter is urgent, and the Russians have ordered the Governors of Sherabad and Baisoon to supply 500 coolies at once to start the work. The Uzbek proprietors of the Joo-Jungle have appealed to the Amir of Bokhara and the Russians have forwarded their version of the case to the Political Agent, Bokhara.

Tashkent Report.

April 4.—Four waggons full of boxes of rifles and ammunition came in by T. O. Railway. They were unloaded and the contents sent to the magazine under strong escorts.

April 7.—A battery of artillery, with six guns, shoulder badge , left Tashkent by the Kokand road. It was said that they were going to Margelan (perhaps Turkestan Horse Mountain Battery, which is generally at Margelan.—H. S.)

April 9.—Forty-two boxes rifle ammunition came in by T. O. Railway. Some time ago an Englishman got a mining concession in the district of Tashkent. He began work and discovered a rich vein of gold. The Russians have taken possession of the gold mine and the Englishman has complained to St. Petersburg.

The country is very disturbed, bands of robbers infest the outskirts of the town, while horses are robbed and people murdered in Tashkent every night.

(Signed) H. SMYTH, Captain,
Military Attaché.

Meshed, April 25, 1908.

Inclosure 3 in No. 251.

No. 18.—*Diary of Military Attaché, Meshed, for week ending April 30, 1908.*

Summary of News.

(Secret.)

THE news of the week is the fighting between the Russians and Persian frontier tribesmen at Balaswar in the Moghan district of the Southern Caucasus, in which fighting the Russian frontier troops seem by all accounts to have been checked, if they have not actually suffered a reverse as is everywhere believed.

2. That the Russians are seriously alarmed as to the possible effect this may have on the irreconcilable Yamut Turkomans of the Atrak frontier is shown by the fact that 150 Cossacks from Askabad and 400 infantry from Krasnovodsk have been sent hastily to the Atrak frontier, to be followed shortly—according to our Krasnovodsk correspondent—by 800 more infantry.

3. But there is evidently pressing need for reinforcements on the Moghan frontier itself, as our Krasnovodsk correspondent reports that 1,550 infantry and artillery men have come in from the garrisons of Askabad, Merv, Kushk, and Tashkent (300 from Tashkent), and have been hurried across to the west side of the Caspian as soon as they can be shipped, warships having apparently carried some of them. The dispatch of troops to Krasnovodsk is confirmed by our Askabad correspondent.

This taking of troops from Turkestan to reinforce the Caucasus is an eloquent testimony to—

(a.) The relief from any danger from the Afghans that the Convention gives the Russians.

(b.) The bad state of the Caucasus and the dangerous situation on the Turkish frontier, if from so large an army ample troops cannot be found readily to deal with a petty frontier incident.

4. As regards the incident itself, our Krasnovodsk correspondent's account is worth considering, as it supplies a plausible explanation of the cause of the incident, viz., an armed raid by tribesmen in the true Pathan style to get possession of the Russian rifles (and ammunition) stored at Balaswar. The number of arms said to have been carried off (3,000 rifles and 2 machine guns) is probably much exaggerated, though anything seems possible with the slackness and treachery prevalent in Russia now.

In this connection, observe accounts by our correspondent and the newspaper of arms, bombs, &c., smuggled into Krasnovodsk wholesale by Armenians.

5. The two batteries usually at Kahka have gone to Merv. This may be purely for training, but it is more likely a strategical move, viz., not to leave two batteries unsupported by other troops isolated among the Turcomans in their present excited state.

"Transcaspian Review."

April 21.—Two cases said to contain semovars were seized at Krasnovodsk on the Kavkaz mercury steamer from Baku. They were found to contain 60 lb. powder and 40 boxes caps.

Communication between Tabreez and Urmia has been interrupted for the last five days, as the Kurds have cut the telegraph wire and interrupted the route.

A powerful bomb has been thrown in the office of the Naphthaline Company at Bibi-Aibat. Several people were injured.

April 22.—On the 18th April General Kondratovich, Acting Governor-General, left (Tashkent) for Kushk, accompanied by his staff.

On the 1st April robbers carried off from the Aul of Kipchak Khudai 1,500 sheep; and on the 3rd April, from the Aul of Geokcha, 800 sheep.

On the 19th April the Commander of the Elizabetopol Brigade reported that the post had been robbed, and that a party of troops sent after the robbers returned with a loss of three killed and ten wounded.

"Turkestanskiya Vedomosti."

April 19.—A man taking 1,000 roubles to the bank at Askabad was robbed by three men. The three robbers were pursued by gendarmes, and one of them was arrested, who turned out to be a soldier of the 1st Railway Battalion.

*Krasnovodsk Reports.**

(A.)

April 3.—Information having been given by a Persian to the Governor of Krasnovodsk that certain Armenians were importing arms, &c., disguised as trade goods, a search was made, and 150 rifles, 6,000 cartridges, and 250 bombs were found concealed.

April 8.—Two Russian war-ships, one large and one small, arrived from Askabad direction, but did not come close in shore.

April 9.—The small war-ship came closer in, and I observed that she had ten guns. The crew of this ship had the figure "5" in red on their shoulder-straps, which were black.

During the day two officers from the war-ships, one a naval and the other an artillery officer, landed and went to the Treasury and drew 1,500 roubles. On their way back to the ships an attempt was made to rob them. The attempt failed, but the artillery officer was killed.

* These are three separate Reports by the same man. I have numbered them (A), (B), and (C).—H. S.

April 11.—Thirty time-expired men of the 4th Transcaspian Battalion arrived from Askabad and passed through to Russia.

Twenty-five more rifles hidden by Armenians have been found, and fifteen Armenians have been arrested.

The Armenians are swearing vengeance against the Musulmans for informing the Russians about these arms.

Strength of the garrison of Krasnovodsk :—

400 men Krasnovodsk Reserve Battalion. (The rest of this battalion on the Persian frontier.—H.S.)

100 men Geok Tepe Reserve Battalion.

50 men Kushk Reserve Battalion. These are time-expired, and will leave soon.

100 men 1st Railway Battalion.

50 men Frontier Guard.

50 Cossacks. These Cossacks are new arrivals from Askabad, and are employed to escort the post between the station and the steamer.

Altogether, with details, there are 800 men in garrison here now.

(B.)

April 16.—Two hundred infantry of the Askabad garrison came in from E., and left by steamer for Baku.

April 17.—Two hundred more infantry of the Askabad garrison and 100 Taman Cossacks came in from E. The infantry left by steamer for Baku; the Cossacks stayed here.

April 18.—Three hundred infantry of the Merv and Kushk garrisons and fifty Kavkaz Regiment Cossacks; also ten Turcoman Jigits (*i.e.*, men of the Turcoman Division—H. S.) came in from E.

These 150 Cossacks with thirty-five Turcomans left for Gumbad-i-Kabus and the Persian frontier, where 400 infantry of the Krasnovodsk Reserve Battalion and thirty-five Turcomans have been sent via Chikishliar.

Now 800 more infantry are being sent to that frontier to overawe the Turcoman tribes, especially the Yamuts, as there is great excitement among the Turcomans on account of the fighting between the Russians and the Persian tribesmen on the Ardabil frontier in which the Russians have been defeated, according to all accounts believed here.

(C.)

April 19.—Two hundred artillery and infantrymen came in from the Merv and Kushk garrisons and left for Baku.

April 20.—Three hundred men of the Kushk Transport Company, medical corps, artillery, and infantry of the Merv and Kushk garrisons came in.

April 21.—All of the above soldiers who were still here left for Baku (or Lenkoran or Astora) by steamer.

April 22.—Three hundred infantry of the Tashkent garrison came in from E. Two war-ships, one large and the other small, came in. Later on they left for the coast near Balaswar in the Moghan district (perhaps taking the above 300 infantry, as writer says no more about them.—H. S.).

April 23.—Fifty men of the 19th Turkestan Battalion came in from E. and left for Baku.

I have checked all the above-mentioned parties of troops myself, but it is possible that more have passed through than I have noted, as every day during the past week parties of 200 men have been arriving from E. and being shipped off to the other side of the Caspian as soon as shipping is available.

No troops have come to Krasnovodsk from the Baku side.

April 24.—Several people have arrived here from Balaswar, where there has been fighting lately. The people give a connected and apparently reliable account of what occurred.

They say that Persian tribesmen made a night raid on the Russian post at Balaswar to get the large number of rifles stored there, and that they succeeded in carrying off 3,000 rifles and two machine-guns. A Russian detachment of 100 soldiers followed

them, but was driven back with considerable loss. The Russians burned a small Persian village. The Persian casualties in the whole affair were thirty-five killed and wounded.

Askabad Report.

April 15.—Two hundred men of the Geok Tepe Battalion have left W. for Krasnovodsk, so I checked the garrison and found—

Garrison of Askabad :—

Four Rifle Battalions, full strength.

Geok Tepe Reserve battalion, 400. The rest of this battalion has gone W. by rail.

Taman Cossacks, 700.

Two batteries artillery with 700 men of the 2nd Artillery Brigade.

Artillery Park with badge.

1st Railway Battalion, 400 men.

Detachment Sappers.

As requested by you, I have been round the station and cannot find that any of the new mobilization carts you refer to are left in Askabad. Each of the battalions has got about eight carts, four- and two-wheeled included, for general transport purposes. That is all.

April 18.—About 100 men of the 3rd and 4th Transcaspian Battalions left W. for Krasnovodsk.

Sarakhs Report.

April 18.—Twenty-two Kavkaz Cossacks came in from Pul-i-Khatun.

April 23.—The above-mentioned twenty-two Cossacks left for Tejen.

Merv Report.

April 21.—I arrived here on the 19th April, and noticed that the Kuban Cossack Battery with eight Q.F. guns and the 6th Mortar Battery of the 2nd Artillery Brigade have arrived here (from Kahka) and are being exercised with the Merv Artillery.

I saw them on parade and counted the men with them.

The Cossack Battery had 100 men, and the Mortar Battery seventy men. (This would not represent the full strength, as there were probably some left in the lines and some at Kahka perhaps too.—H. S.).

(Signed) H. SMYTH, *Captain,
Military Attaché.*

Meshed, April 30, 1908.

[19689]

No. 252.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received June 9.)

(No. 123. Confidential.)

Sir,

Tehran, May 21, 1908.

I HAVE the honour to transmit herewith, with reference to my telegram No. 124 of to-day's date, copy of the despatch in which His Majesty's Consul at Mohammerah reports the conclusion of a formal alliance in writing between the Sheikh of Mohammerah and the Bakhtiari Khans.

I must confess that I was quite unprepared to see the negotiations on which I reported in my despatch No. 97 of the 23rd April arrive at a result so speedily. I cannot entertain very sanguine hopes as to the durability of such an arrangement, but so long as it lasts it seems calculated to assist in promoting peace and preserving order in the regions governed by the respective Chieftains—regions where there are numerous and important British interests—and as such I venture to think that its conclusion may not be displeasing to His Majesty's Government. To my mind the arrangement seems to be a step in the right direction, and all the more satisfactory in that it was taken without foreign instigation or assistance.

I have, &c.
(Signed) CHARLES M. MARLING.

Inclosure in No. 252.

Consul McDouall to Mr. Marling.

(No. 13. Confidential.)

Sir,

Mohammerah, April 24, 1908.

I HAVE the honour to report that the Sardar Arfa went to Wais to meet the Bakhtiari Khans; owing to illness he was unable to remain, and Salar Arfa, Shehab-es-Saltaneh, and Sarim-el-Mulk returned to Mohammerah with him on the 14th April and left on the 21st. On that day they called on me with Haji Rais Tujar to represent the Sardar Arfa, who was unable to come ashore owing to the abscess he is suffering from. They informed me that they had now conferred with the Sardar Arfa and made friends with him, and made a formal written alliance with him; that in future they are to act together, and their respective tribesmen must obey the chief of the district, Arab or Bakhtiari, in which they happen to be. They are to act together in loyal service to the Government and people of Persia so long as there is no interference with the various concessions held by them respectively or increase in the taxes demanded; but if such interference or alteration in taxes is made they will act as one in resisting it. They hope that this will tend to render the country, and especially the Ispahan road, perpetually safe. Haji Rais Tujar confirmed this, and both parties called on me to witness that they had made this agreement, and in the event of any dispute occurring between them they asked that we should inquire and, on finding out with whom the fault lay, advise that party that he is in the wrong.

The Salar Arfa said that the Legation had on several occasions advised them to make friends with the Sardar Arfa, and now that they had done so they hoped that the Legation might be able to give them a certain increased amount of support in Tehran.

I said that I was very glad to hear that they had made friends, which should tend to increased security for trade in these districts; that I would report the matter to His Majesty's Legation and Consul-General, Bushire; and that I would always be glad to assist by advice in preventing any disagreement between them. It had appeared to me that there had been a difficulty in arranging matters before owing to the Khans themselves not always acting together. Both the Salar Arfa and Shehab-es-Saltaneh assured me that there was no likelihood of any differences between the Khans themselves in future, and that the Sardar Arfa will use his influence to prevent any difference between them.

Copy sent to His Majesty's Consul-General, Bushire, and His Majesty's Vice-Consul, Ahwaz.

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. McDOUALL.

[19690]

No. 253.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received June 9.)

(No. 124.)

Sir,

Gulahek, May 21, 1908.

IN continuation of my despatch No. 103 of the 30th ultimo, I have the honour to report that the Persian Cabinet resigned office on the 2nd instant, and the Minister of Finance allowed it to be understood that his own resignation was the immediate consequence of the conversation I had with him a few days earlier. Though it was generally accepted that Ministers had been really actuated by the wish to bring about the formation of a Cabinet from which Nizam-es-Sultaneh, the Premier and Minister of Interior, should be excluded, there is no doubt that Sani-ed-Dowleh's unscrupulous use of my interview with him to enable him to escape from the difficult position into which vanity had led him produced a certain effect, and in the week during which the Ministerial crisis lasted, a few speeches were made in the Assembly protesting against the "attempt to impose foreign financial control," and a few blustering articles to the same effect appeared in the press. There was talk of increasing the duties on tea and sugar, as proposed in Sani-ed-Dowleh's scheme, whether the consent of Great Britain and Russia were acquired or no, and, again, it was gravely suggested that the nation should combine to compel our compliance by abandoning the use of those commodities, while another patriot advocated that M. Bizot should be paid his salary for the full term of his mission and allowed to return to France. All this must not, of course, be taken too seriously;

but considering that Sani-ed-Dowleh had told me himself that his decision to resign had been taken before I saw him, I thought it as well to let the facts be known in quarters where his misrepresentations might otherwise have produced a bad effect. As soon as the Cabinet was reconstructed I called on the Minister for Foreign Affairs and protested against the conduct of a responsible Minister in trying to drag my name into the internal affairs of the Government, and in grossly misrepresenting the purport of my language. Mushir-ed-Dowleh scarcely attempted to justify his colleague, but protested that no harm had been done, for Sani-ed-Dowleh's character was so well known that no one attached much importance to his utterances!

In this opinion I think Mushir-ed-Dowleh is right, for in the general interest excited by the last resignation of the Cabinet the momentary interest in the incident appears to have died out. In other respects, however, I hope that good results will follow. Very much as the people at large have been inclined to look upon the new form of Government as relieving them from the necessity for paying taxes, so the Assembly seems to imagine that its sovereign powers extend to foreign relations, and it is apt to overlook the fact that the observance of Treaties is not a matter of favour but of obligation. Sooner or later this erroneous idea had to be corrected, but it was a lesson which, if left to Persian Ministers to administer, might have been delayed indefinitely out of consideration for the "susceptibilities" of the Medjliss. And both in the interests of Persia herself, and from our own point of view, to prevent German interference in financial questions, delay is undesirable.

The condition of the country is going from bad to worse, and the feeble Government is absolutely unable to do anything to restore a decent degree of order, and even if money were forthcoming, it is in the last degree improbable that without foreign assistance any serious measure of reform can be undertaken. The more enlightened of the Ministers are no doubt aware of this, but the general public, and the Assembly, would consider it unpatriotic to admit the hard reality, and it is, therefore, I think, a matter of congratulation that it should have been brought home to them by Sani-ed-Dowleh's indiscretion that Persia must look to Great Britain and Russia to help her out of her troubles. I cannot pretend that the necessary impression has yet been produced, but at all events the first step has been taken on the way to a right understanding of the situation.

As regards German interference, the chances of such an eventuality appear to me to be rather remote. A loan, as a purely financial operation, is, of course, under present conditions, quite out of the question, and the only real danger appears to be that the German bank may be opened before long, and then the door is open to the Persian Government to obtain advances on current account, secured nominally on the customs. The best means to guard against this appears to be the firm establishment of the authority of the Financial Adviser, and I venture to think that his recent experience will have taught Sani-ed-Dowleh that so long as he declines to avail himself of M. Bizot's advice, he can have no chance of obtaining the assent of the two Powers to any scheme involving an alteration of the customs tariff.

Financially, the country appears to be almost at the end of its tether, and M. de Hartwig, with whom I have talked over the position, agrees with me in believing that in a very short time the straits of the Government will be such that they will be forced to make an appeal for assistance, and he is disposed, until that moment arrives, to leave them to *cuire dans leur propre jus*.

I have, &c.
(Signed) CHARLES M. MARLING.

[19691]

No. 254.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received June 9.)

(No. 125. Very Confidential.)

Sir,

Tehran, May 21, 1908.

ALTHOUGH Count Quadt is far too discreet to make use of any language or take any action to which exception can be taken, there can be little doubt that he is actively pursuing the same policy, though by different means, as that initiated by Baron von Richthofen. From all I can learn he loses no opportunity of warning Persians against the insidious designs of Great Britain and Russia, whom he represents as aiming at obtaining absolute control over the country by financial means, and I have some reason to believe that it is owing to him that the Persian Government had

stubbornly declined to avail itself of M. Bizot's advice, and even to allow him facility to examine the financial situation. It is no doubt with this view that he has been giving currency to a report that M. de la Martinière has been recalled, the insinuation being of course that the French Minister has been too active in pressing M. Bizot's services on the Government.

He has not recently spoken to me on financial affairs, but a few days ago he reverted to them in conversation with the Russian Minister, and again brought up the possibility of "international" control. M. de Hartwig informed him that international was scarcely the word to use, as there were only two Powers financially interested in Persia, and those Powers did not intend to admit any other interference.

I have, &c.
(Signed) CHARLES M. MARLING.

[19694]

No. 255.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received June 9.)

(No. 128.)

Sir,

Gulahek, May 21, 1908.

JUST before he left, the French Minister informed me that he had obtained formal promises from the Minister for Foreign Affairs on three matters which he had for some time been negotiating. These are the payment of M. Bizot's salary from the customs receipts, the grant of a small subvention for the French school, and, lastly, the renewal of the contracts of the five French professors in the employment of the Persian Government. Mushir-ed-Dowleh authorized M. de La Martinière to inform his Government of the settlement of these questions.

The question of the Financial Adviser's salary is one that had preoccupied M. de La Martinière a good deal. M. Bizot has been all his life accustomed to seeing his salary paid with exact punctuality, and would feel it to be beneath his dignity to have to press the Persian Government to pay it in case it should fall in arrear. As he is a man of private means, and by no means enamoured of his position here, M. de La Martinière has been constantly under the apprehension that he might, should his salary be irregularly paid, suddenly throw up the appointment, and from what I have heard from M. Bizot himself I am sure his apprehensions are well founded.

The subvention to the French school may be regarded with some satisfaction as a counterpoise to the subsidy to the German school. The amount is not, however, yet fixed.

Much the same view may be taken of the readiness of the Persian Government to agree to the renewal of the contracts of the French professors. I believe, however, that one of these gentlemen has already decided to leave Persia, while two others were discontented with the present scale of their emoluments, and are not likely to re-engage themselves on the same terms. M. de La Martinière has, however, succeeded in obtaining a promise that in that event the Persian Government will apply to the French Government to suggest candidates to fill the vacancies.

I have, &c.
(Signed) CHARLES M. MARLING.

[19695]

No. 256.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received June 9.)

(No. 129.)

Sir,

Gulahek, May 21, 1908.

WITH reference to my telegram No. 112 of the 30th April, I have the honour to transmit herewith copy of a despatch from Mr. Consul-General Wratislaw reporting on Kurdish outrages in the Urumia districts. It is evident from this account that, while the position is sufficiently serious, the first reports sent by Mohtashem-es-Sultaneh and the local "Enjumen" of Urumia, and apparently believed in by the Russian Vice-Consul, of the massacre of 2,000 persons were greatly exaggerated. Mr. Wratislaw also appears to be in some doubt how far the Turks can be held to have incited the Kurdish tribesmen to commit these excesses.

I have, &c.
(Signed) CHARLES M. MARLING.

Inclosure in No. 256.

Consul-General Wratislaw to Mr. Marling.

(No. 6.)

Sir,

Urumia, April 25, 1908.

WITH reference to my telegram No. 27 of the 18th instant (which, I fear, has been much delayed in transmission), reporting an increase of Kurdish outrages, I regret to say that the situation shows no sign of improvement. Both to the south and the north of this place the Persian villages are exposed to constant attacks from large bodies of Kurds which they have no adequate means of repelling, and much property and numerous lives have thus been lost during the last fortnight. In particular, a group of villages between Urumia and Solduz was last week besieged by quite an army of Kurds, and after a stout resistance was overcome and pillaged. Four women and several men lost their lives.

Between Urumia and Salmas the telegraph line was ten days ago systematically destroyed for considerable distances in several places, both poles and wires being carried off. The line has been repaired from here to the borders of Salmas, but on the farther side the men sent to execute repairs were again caught by the Kurds and all their material confiscated. Telegraphic communications have thus been interrupted for ten days, and there seems no immediate prospect of their being re-established.

It is difficult to say how far the Turkish authorities on the frontier are directly responsible for this state of things. They are certainly much more lax than before in controlling the Kurdish inhabitants of the districts they occupy, but I do not think there exists any actual proof that they incite them to outrage, whatever suspicions may be entertained. On the other hand, Tahir Pasha's solemn warning to the Persian Commissioner to abstain from interference with the Kurds quite ties Mohtashem-es-Sultaneh's hands, and he is afraid to follow up marauders to their homes for fear of fresh complications. He has besides too few men to do so effectively, for his forces have quickly melted away in the usual Persian fashion.

His helplessness in the matter of maintaining public security has incurred him considerable odium amongst the landed and mercantile classes, while his efforts to establish something in the way of a settled government have displeased the clique which previously ruled the town according to their own fancy. Everything is being done to render his position untenable, and attacks on private houses in or near the town are got up almost nightly, less from a desire to plunder than with the object of discrediting the Governor. The amount of firing which accompanies these demonstrations naturally causes considerable alarm.

In the surrounding villages, and to a less extent in the town, the idea of submitting to the Turks and calling them in to restore order is again gaining ground, and lends some colour to the suspicions that the Turks are responsible for this renewal of Kurdish activity.

On the whole Mohtashem-es-Sultaneh's position appears somewhat critical, and it is not impossible that he may eventually be driven from the town, as was his predecessor, Imam Kuli Mirza.

I have, &c.
(Signed) A. C. WRATISLAW.

[19696]

No. 257.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received June 9.)

(No. 130.)

Sir,

Gulahek, May 21, 1908.

IN reply to your despatch No. 62 of the 22nd ultimo, inclosing a letter from the London Manager of the Imperial Bank of Persia, asking for information as to the proportion which the bank is permitted to retain of the receipts encashed by it from the customs of Kermanshah, I have the honour to report that as the Board appear to be in some doubt as to the meaning of the statements on the subject furnished to it by the local Manager, I referred the question to Mr. V. A. C. Hawkins, the member of the Board who has been specially deputed to examine the affairs of the bank.

In reply, Mr. Hawkins has sent me a communication, copy inclosed, which has recently been received from the Manager of the Kermanshah branch.

Mr. Hawkins is communicating direct with the Board on this matter.

I have, &c.
(Signed) CHARLES M. MARLING.

Inclosure in No. 257.

Note communicated to Mr. Marling by Mr. Hawkins, which he has received from the Kermanshah Customs.

IN reply to your note B of the 30th ultimo, we beg to supply you with the following information:—

All the receipts of the customs here (which include those of Kasr-i-Shirin, Kurdistan, Sakki, Baneh, and Gilan) are passed via the bank to Tehran after deduction of expenses of Kermanshah, the sub-custom-houses deducting their several expenses before remitting to Kermanshah.

Extraneous expenses, such as repairs, are permitted out of the receipts, but any funds required for special or unusual purposes are supposed to be dependent upon the sanction of Tehran. It appears, however, that the Directors formerly here had made themselves very free of the customs funds. We understand that now such malappropriations have been stopped.

The expenses of the Kermanshah custom-house appear to be about 13,000 krans per mensem, which consist almost entirely of wages to their unnecessarily large staff.

(Signed) E. B. SOANE.

Kermanshah, May 10, 1908.

[19697]

No. 258.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received June 9.)

(No. 131.)

Sir,

Gulahek, May 21, 1908.

THE Persian Government seem to be hesitating to send a Special Mission to Constantinople to discuss the frontier question with the Porte or, if possible, with the Palace direct. Mushir-ed-Dowleh, on whom, as authorized by your telegram No. 91 of the 1st instant, I have urged the wisdom of that course, as has also the Russian Minister, seems to be convinced of it personally, but to be unwilling to accept the responsibility of forcing his views on his colleagues; but when I saw him last, on the 19th instant, he said he hoped to be able to inform me in a day or two that the Cabinet had decided in favour of the Mission. I imagine that the Government are in doubt as to whom to send. Ala-es-Sultaneh, the newly appointed Ambassador, might do as a figure-head, but it is thought that he has not sufficient energy to carry through so difficult a task. On the other hand, his "agrément" has already been obtained, and his selection would, it is thought, have the advantage of overcoming any objections which the Turks might raise to receiving a Special Mission.

It is also possible that the question of expense militates against the proposal.

I presume that, should the Special Mission be sent, the Persian Commissioner would be withdrawn from Urumia, and it would in that event be necessary to consider whether Mr. Consul-General Wratishaw should not be allowed to return to Tabreez.

I have, &c.
(Signed) CHARLES M. MARLING.

[19699]

No. 259.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received June 9.)

(No. 133. Very Confidential.)

Sir,

Gulahek, May 22, 1908.

I HAVE the honour to report that Mr. V. A. Caesar Hawkins, a member of the Board of the Imperial Bank of Persia in London, arrived in Tehran on the 5th instant, armed with very full powers to investigate the conduct of the Bank's affairs by the local Chief Manager, Mr. Rabino. I gather from the conversations I have had with

him that Mr. Hawkins is exceedingly dissatisfied with Mr. Rabino's management, and that he considers that, in one instance at least, the latter's conduct has been "something worse than disloyal." He was in no way apprehensive that Mr. Rabino's joining the German Bank would do any harm to the position of the Imperial Bank of Persia.

I have, &c.
(Signed) CHARLES M. MARLING.

[19701]

No. 260.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received June 9.)

(No. 135.)

Sir,

Gulahek, May 22, 1908.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 115 of the 20th instant, I have the honour to transmit herewith copy of a despatch which has reached me this morning from His Majesty's Vice-Consul at Resht, giving accounts of the late incident on the Russo-Persian frontier at Bela Sevar. From this report it would seem that the Russian Vice-Consul at Ardebil admits that the affair was much more serious than M. de Hartwig has cared to admit to me, and that the chief blame for it rests with the Russian officer who lost his life. It appears, too, that the Persian reports of excesses committed by the Russian soldiery, which M. de Hartwig at first entirely denied, are substantially correct.

I have, &c.
(Signed) CHARLES M. MARLING.

Inclosure in No. 260.

M. Rabino to Mr. Marling.

Sir,

Enzeli, May 18, 1908.

I HAVE the honour to report two versions I have heard of the Bileh Sowar incident:—

1. M. Olferieff, Russian Vice-Consul at Ardebil, whom I met at Lenkoran, informed me that a Russian frontier officer, whose horse had strayed across the frontier into Persian territory, entered Persia with four Cossacks to recover the horse. This officer had two years ago killed two sons of one of the principal Shahsevens Chiefs, who were engaged in smuggling. Ever since the Russian officer's life had been in danger. He was pressed to accept a transfer, but refused to do so, as his post was very remunerative, he getting 70 per cent. of all goods seized. The Russian officer came across some Shahsevens, who fired at him and shot him, as well as three of his Cossacks. The fourth Cossack was wounded.

The frontier soldiers, hearing that their officer had been killed, entered the Persian Settlement of Bileh Sowar, slew forty-one of the inhabitants, and set fire to the custom-house. Reinforcements were sent from Baku, and a party of 200 men entered Persian territory in pursuit of the Shahsevens. They were surrounded by 1,000 mounted Shahsevens and had to retire, losing three killed and nine wounded. The losses of the Shahsevens were fourteen killed and three wounded.

M. Olferieff was then sent to Lenkoran, and an amicable settlement was agreed upon. The Russians ask for an indemnity, and, I believe, insist upon the punishment of two of the leaders in the affray.

The Shahsevens declare that should they be severely dealt with they will retire into Turkish territory.

2. M. Quinet's version slightly differs from the above. The Russian officer was requested by the native Customs official not to follow his horse, as feeling ran rather high against him, and undertook to have the horse returned in the course of two days.

The Russian officer decided, however, to recover his horse without delay, and with four Cossacks crossed the frontier. He found his horse amongst a party of Shahsevens, who refused to let him take it, alleging that they had no proof that the horse was his. The officer thereupon drew his revolver and wounded a Shahseven. The Shahsevens retaliated, killing the officer and three Cossacks and wounding the other Cossack.

The frontier guards, hearing this, entered Bileh Sowar and committed the excesses already related. They furthermore took possession of 130 tomans they found in the custom-house.

[1580]

Reinforcements having been received from Baku, 200 men entered Persian territory in pursuit of the Shahsevens. The latter fixed kullahs on sticks to attract the enemy's fire, and then succeeded in surrounding the Russians, who retired with a loss of eighty killed. This is no doubt exaggerated.

M. Olferieff, who admitted that the Russian officer was in the wrong in crossing the frontier, contends, however, that the Shahsevens had no right to fire on the officer, and that all the brigandage on the Astara-Ardebil road can be safely attributed to them, and that they should be severely dealt with.

Cases of brigandage may be proved, and the Shahsevens should certainly be punished.

It is difficult, however, to understand the contention that the Shahsevens had no right to fire on some one crossing the frontier without authority.

The Persian Government recognize their frontier tribes as keepers of their frontier, and consequently assimilate them to frontier guards. Should the Persian Government's views be correct, the Shahsevens had certainly the right to fire on the officer when he crossed the frontier.

I regret that I am unable to obtain fuller information on this incident, which, before the Anglo-Russian Agreement, might have led to serious complications.

The frontier guards at Bileh Sowar have been increased to 1,000 men.

I have, &c.

(Signed) H. L. RABINO.

[19702]

No. 261.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received June 9.)

(No. 136.)

Sir,

Gulahek, May 22, 1908.

It is difficult to see anything in the events of the past four weeks that points to any immediate improvement in the condition of Persia. The object of Ministers in twice resigning was solely to get rid of the Premier, Nizam-es-Sultaneh, whose venality and unconstitutional methods had rendered him exceedingly unpopular. He seemed, moreover, to have acted towards his colleagues more as the Grand Vizier of an absolute Monarch than as the head of a Constitutional Cabinet, and no doubt that they found it impossible to co-operate with him. It is very improbable that the new Cabinet, the construction of which is hardly yet definitely settled, will prove any more capable of restoring order in the prevailing chaos and disorganization of the Government. It seems practically certain, however, that Sani-ed-Dowleh will become Prime Minister, and Moltashem-es-Sultaneh, the Persian Commissioner at Urmia, is said to have been recalled to succeed Nizam-es-Sultaneh as Minister of the Interior. It seems difficult to conceive a more unfortunate choice than that of those two Ministers.

I am not quite sure to what motive to attribute the Shah's action in inviting Naser-ul-Mulk to return to Persia. His Imperial Majesty may possibly have done it in the interests of the country, for Naser-ul-Mulk could undoubtedly be of great service if he were confident of the support of the Palace. It seems to me, however, to be more likely that His Majesty's message, which was sent through the President of the Assembly, was merely intended to gain him a little temporary popularity so as to enable him to get safely out of the capital to one of his country seats.

I doubt, however, whether the moment for Naser-ul-Mulk's return has yet come, but it is in any case most improbable that he will accept the Shah's invitation, except under the most stringent conditions.

Tehran itself remains relatively quieter, but there is a general feeling of profound depression at the helplessness of the Government and an increasing tendency to lay the blame for the existing state of affairs on the Shah, who is again being accused of preparing another *coup d'état*, but, so far as I can see, there is no ground for these suspicions.

Governors have been found for most of the vacant posts, but with the exception of Zil-es-Sultan at Shiraz and Serdar Motazid at Kerman, none of them seem to be capable of a real effort to administer their districts. At Yezd a mob of villagers has been surrounding the telegraph office by way of protest against a new tax, but Mr. Acting Vice-Consul Blackman, by a display of considerable coolness and tact, has so far succeeded in preventing any serious incident. The Government here are

unable to do more than send soothing messages. Kermanshah is threatened with an incursion by the Kakavends, and Captain Haworth describes the situation as menacing. The Government promise to send Zafar-es-Sultaneh, the new Governor, with a strong force, but there is some doubt whether he will not refuse the post at the last moment. Otherwise the country is comparatively quiet, except for a few cases of brigandage, chiefly in the neighbourhood of Ispahan.

I have, &c.

(Signed) CHARLES M. MARLING.

[19703]

No. 262.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received June 9.)

(No. 137.)

Sir,

Gulahek, May 22, 1908.

I HAVE the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your telegram No. 98 of the 14th instant, in which you are so good as to authorize me to inform the Persian Government that, in view of the non-payment of the interest on the 1903-4 advance due on the 4th April and also of the sinking fund for the last two years, and in view also of their failure to make any reply to Sir C. Spring-Rice's note of the 31st August, 1907, announcing the conditions on which His Majesty's Government were prepared to agree to the suspension of the sinking fund for three years, His Majesty's Government can no longer admit of any discussion on those terms. It would, I think, cause needless irritation, and would therefore be impolitic, to make that communication just at present. Nor is there now the same necessity to take the step as appeared to me to be the case when I first suggested it for your consideration. At that time there was good reason to believe from the statements of M. Mornard that the Persian Government were actually in a position to pay off both interest and sinking fund, and thus liberate themselves from the conditions we sought to impose on them. This is, however, not now the case; the Persian Government is in the direst straits for money, and, if M. Mornard's forecasts are correct as to the customs revenues, it is certain that the interest on the loan will again be very much in arrear. In the circumstances, therefore, I propose to avail myself of the latitude which your telegram allows me, and to reserve the communication for a more pressing occasion.

I have, &c.

(Signed) CHARLES M. MARLING.

[19616]

No. 263.

Mr. O'Beirne to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received June 9.)

(No. 246.)

Sir,

St. Petersburg, May 23, 1908.

ON the receipt of your despatch No. 117, Confidential, of the 27th ultimo, I addressed an *aide-mémoire* to the Imperial Ministry for Foreign Affairs, inquiring whether the Russian Government had any knowledge of the alleged grant to M. Stemrich of a Concession for the construction of a railway from Tehran to Kermanshah.

I have now received a reply from the Russian Government to the effect that inquiries have been made by the Russian Minister at Tehran, but that he has been unable to obtain any confirmation of the report. M. de Hartwig supposes that the article in the Paris "New York Herald" was founded on the steps which were taken some time ago by the German Legation to obtain different Concessions in Persia.

I have, &c.

(Signed) HUGH O'BEIRNE.

[19617]

No. 264.

Mr. O'Beirne to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received June 9.)

(No. 247.)
Sir,

St. Petersburg, May 23, 1908.

WITH reference to your telegram No. 133 of the 20th instant, I have the honour to transmit to you herewith copy of a note which I have addressed to M. Isvolsky relative to the question of the exchange of the telegraph lines in Persia.

I have, &c.

(Signed) HUGH O'BEIRNE.

Inclosure in No. 264.

Mr. O'Beirne to M. Isvolsky.

M. le Ministre,

St. Petersburg, May 9 (22), 1908.

HIS Majesty's Government have had under their careful consideration the *aide-mémoire* from the Imperial Ministry for Foreign Affairs of the 30th March (12th April) relative to the question of the exchange of telegraph lines in Persia.

Sir E. Grey desires me in the first place to explain to your Excellency, in reply to that *aide-mémoire*, that, although no specific mention was made in Sir A. Nicolson's communication of the 10th (23rd) March of the admission at stated hours of Russian signallers to the use of the telegraph line from Nasratabad to Khaf, it was not the intention of His Majesty's Government to attempt to deprive the Russian signallers of the privilege in question; in view of the fact that it was contemplated that a similar privilege should be enjoyed by British signallers on the Meshed-Khaf section and the Tehran-Meshed line, it would naturally belong also to the Russian signallers as regards the Nasratabad-Khaf section.

As a result, however, of a further examination of the whole matter of the exchange of lines, His Majesty's Government have arrived at the conclusion that, as regards the question of signallers, the best solution would be that each Power should withdraw its employés completely from the other Power's sphere (the course originally proposed by Sir A. Nicolson in the Memorandum which was handed by him to your Excellency on the 2nd (15th) April, 1907), and that an arrangement should be concluded by which each Power, as regards the telegraph lines within its sphere, should undertake to instruct its own employés to transmit all messages sent by the other Power's agents, or in the interests of subjects of the other Power, with due dispatch and accuracy. An exchange of notes might embody such an arrangement.

As was clearly and fully expressed in the *aide-mémoire* of the 31st May (13th June), 1907, from the Imperial Ministry for Foreign Affairs, the Anglo-Russian Convention aims at removing everything which could possibly be the cause of friction between the two Powers. It appears to His Majesty's Government that the above solution is more strictly in accordance with the spirit of this Convention than the arrangements previously contemplated for admitting Russian employés to the use of lines within the British sphere and *vice versa*. It also seems to them to conform more strictly to the spirit of the Agreement of the 18th (31st) August, 1907, relative to the exchange of telegraphs, Articles 1 and 2. It was understood at the time that the term "same conditions" which occurs in these articles referred to conditions affecting the maintenance and repair of the telegraph lines, and obligations towards the Persian Government and relations with that Government, connected with the management of these lines. Indeed, when His Majesty's Government gave their assent to the Russian control over the Meshed-Khaf section continuing they were guided by this view of the matter.

I am instructed by Sir E. Grey to explain to your Excellency that in making the above proposal His Majesty's Government are actuated entirely by a desire to insure, by adhering strictly to the spirit of the recent Convention, that all its objects shall be successfully attained. I am directed to express the hope that the Imperial Government will see their way to accept the proposal.

I avail, &c.

(Signed) HUGH O'BEIRNE.

[19943]

No. 265.

Mehdi Khan to Mr. Mallet.—(Received June 9.)

(Private.)

Dear Mr. Mallet,

Persian Legation, London, June 6, 1908.

I AM much obliged to you for your letter. My object was to show how our frontier questions with Russia and Turkey stand at present, and to explain our views regarding the latter. It was not my purpose to make a request that these matters should be discussed at Reval; but I thought that in case they came under discussion it would be better that His Britannic Majesty's Government should be aware of our views. I venture to inclose herewith some notes on the principal points of my observations of yesterday. I need hardly say that I shall be greatly interested to know should there be anything fresh as regards the attitude of His Britannic Majesty's Government concerning the Turkish question.

Yours very truly,
(Signed) MEHDI,

Inclosure 1 in No. 265.

Note respecting Russo-Persian Frontier.

MOST of the Russian proposals have at once been accepted, and the Governor-General of Azerbaidjan has been instructed by telegraph, and he is in the act of giving effect to the proposals. The proposals that have at once been accepted are as follows:—

- (a.) Apprehension of those at whose hands the Russian officer died.
- (b.) Payment of claims of Russian subjects according to frontier settlements.
- (c.) Return (provided they are found) of Russian soldiers who have run away.
- (d.) Return of twenty rifles said by Russians to have been stolen.
- (e.) Satisfaction to the people of the killed officer.
- (f.) Removal of Shhahsuvan Chiefs, viz., Mohammad Gholi Khan and others further from the frontier

Two of the above proposals have been carried out already, viz., (b) and (f), and the rest of the accepted proposals will be carried out strictly.

But other proposals of the Russian Commander, viz.:—

1. Compensation for what has been plundered;
2. Indemnity for expenses of sending military force;
3. Indemnity for alleged occupation of Russian territory by Mohammad Gholi Khan,

require inquiry and seeing to. The Persian Government has not refused the latter proposals, but wishes that they would be inquired into.

At the same time the Persian Government has asked for compensation for the inhabitants of Beliasuvar and other villages destroyed by Russians.

Inclosure 2 in No. 265.

Note respecting Turko-Persian Frontier.

IT is hardly possible that this frontier question can be settled by these Frontier Commissions. As long as there is disagreement in the basis of the discussions no settlement can be arrived at.

The Sublime Porte does not consider the last Treaty of Arzeroom as final, and refers to the Treaty of Sultan Murad (1631).

The Imperial Persian Government considers clauses 2 and 3 of Arzeroom Treaty as finally deciding this question.

Under these circumstances it is not likely that matters will make progress unless
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pressure is put upon the Turkish Government by the Governments of His Britannic Majesty and that of Russia, for a question that has been pending for over sixty years can hardly be solved by men talking and discussion. As regards transferring the seat of discussion to Constantinople, will this be of any avail? This very expedient was resorted to some thirty-five years ago, but with what result?

[19971]

No. 266.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received June 9.)

(No. 137.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Tehran, June 9, 1908.

SITUATION. My telegram No. 136 of yesterday's date.

Yesterday morning the town was patrolled by Cossacks, and later a Proclamation denouncing the persons arrested as traitors was issued by the Shah. The town is as quiet as usual, and the people accepted the Proclamation passively.

Following is Confidential:—

It is generally believed that the Russians, if not the Russian Minister himself, contrived and backed the Shah's *coup*. I am convinced, from M. de Hartwig's language to me, that at all events the intended arrests were known to him.

[20045]

No. 267.

Mr. O'Beirne to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received June 10.)

(No. 262.)

Sir,

St. Petersburg, June 5, 1908.

WITH reference to recent correspondence respecting the Russo-Persian frontier incidents, I have the honour to report that the following official account is published here of the recent collision in which Captain Dvoeglazoff, commanding the Beliassevar detachment of the Elizabetpol Brigade, lost his life:—

Captain Dvoeglazoff's horse is stated to have escaped over the frontier into Persia, where it was seized by a party of armed Tartars. Captain Dvoeglazoff, taking with him a mounted patrol of seven men, crossed the frontier in pursuit, but the small Russian force fell into a Tartar ambush, and Captain Dvoeglazoff and one of his men were shot down. A detachment of the 77th Infantry Regiment came to the assistance of the frontier guards and opened fire on the Tartars. In the engagement which ensued four Russians were killed and five wounded.

In giving the above account of the incident the official communiqué denies the truth of the report that Captain Dvoeglazoff had killed two Persians during the search for his horse.

I have, &c.

(Signed) HUGH O'BEIRNE.

[1957]

No. 268.

Sir Edward Grey to Mr. Marling.

(No. 109.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Foreign Office, June 10, 1908.

SHELLILIE.

A complaint has been received from the Persian Transport Company to the effect that the builders have been compelled to suspend operations on Messrs. Lynch's shed by order of the Governor of Shushter, acting on instructions from the Persian Government.

If you see no objection, you may make representations asking that this obstruction on the part of the Governor may be put a stop to.

[19913]

No. 269.

Sir Edward Grey to Mr. Marling.

(No. 94.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, June 10, 1908.

THREE Bakhtiari Chiefs—the Sirdar Assad, his younger brother, and their nephew—called at this Office on the 30th ultimo, and were received by Sir C. Hardinge, who expressed his pleasure at seeing them, and at having an opportunity to discuss with them the relations of the Chiefs with His Majesty's Government.

Sir C. Hardinge informed the Sirdar Assad that His Majesty's Government had recently not been entirely satisfied with the attitude of the Chiefs towards the Oil Concessions Syndicate. He reminded his Excellency that the Syndicate had come to an agreement with the Chiefs whereby the latter were to provide guards for the Syndicate's works, and to receive in return 2,000*l.* a year. The Chiefs had lately asked for a further annual sum of 500*l.*, and to this the Syndicate had agreed. Nevertheless, guards had not been supplied of late and thefts had been committed on the property for which no compensation had been paid. The result of this had been that His Majesty's Government had been put to the expense of bringing guards from India to protect the property of the Syndicate.

The Sirdar Assad said that the 500*l.* had not been paid, to which Sir C. Hardinge replied that so soon as compensation was made for the thefts which had been committed on the Syndicate's property, the instalment due last November, which had been withheld on that account, would be handed over.

His Excellency stated that all the claims made by the Syndicate for thefts or on other accounts had been deducted by the Syndicate from the 2,000*l.* due to the Chiefs, who consequently owed them no money.

He then explained that the cause of the recent trouble was that the rival branch of the tribe had held the chieftainship for more than two years, and that this branch, being very unfriendly to England, had done all in their power to annoy the British Syndicate. Now that his own branch of the family had been reinstated in their former position of principal Chiefs, these troubles would no longer occur, and he would guarantee that in a short time the Syndicate would be perfectly satisfied.

Sir C. Hardinge told the Sirdar Assad that, on his return to the Foreign Office two years ago, it had been a matter of great regret to him to find that the Bakhtiari Chiefs, whom he had always regarded as England's best and most loyal friends in Persia, were acting in a manner hostile to British interests. It seemed to him a strange anomaly that His Majesty's Government, who were the friends of the Bakhtiaris, should be obliged to bring guards from India in order to protect British subjects from their tribe. His Majesty's Government had serious cause for complaint against the Bakhtiari tribe on this account, and the promise which his Excellency had just given was a great relief to him, as he knew that the Chief's word would be kept. He added that he trusted that, on his Excellency's return to Persia, which, he understood, would be in two months' time, he would himself visit the works of the Syndicate and see that no harm was being done to them by any members of his tribe, and that the officials of the Syndicate were perfectly satisfied in every way.

The Sirdar Assad promised faithfully on his word that he would do this, for the sake, as he said, of his old friendship with Sir C. Hardinge, who, he said, might rest assured that as soon as his Excellency returned to Persia there would be no further need for the Indian guards. He further promised to write at once to his brother, the ruling Chief, giving an account of his conversation and urging that immediate steps should be taken for the protection of the Syndicate's works.

The Chief went on to say that he had known many British Consuls who had always been very friendly to the Bakhtiari tribe, but that recently His Majesty's Vice-Consul at Ahwaz had adopted a hostile attitude towards the Chiefs. His Excellency asked Sir C. Hardinge to do what he could to correct this, and to restore friendly relations between the tribe and Captain Lorimer.

Sir C. Hardinge told the Sirdar Assad that the best way of restoring those relations would be for the tribe loyally to carry out all the engagements they had taken towards the Syndicate, and that his Excellency might rest assured that Captain Lorimer's attitude towards the Bakhtiaris would be as friendly as possible and the same as that of his predecessors as soon as the causes of the complaint made by the Syndicate against the tribe had been removed.

The Sirdar Assad begged Sir C. Hardinge to do what he could to restore friendly relations in such circumstances. Sir C. Hardinge promised that he would do so.

After a short friendly conversation on other matters the Chiefs took their leave and on their departure Sir C. Hardinge reminded them of their promise, which they said that they would not forget.

I am, &c.
(Signed) E. GREY.

[19913]

No. 270.

*Foreign Office to India Office.**

Sir,

Foreign Office, June 10, 1908.

I AM directed by Secretary Sir Edward Grey to transmit to you herewith copy of despatch which he has addressed to His Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires at Tehran,† recording a conversation which took place recently between Sir C. Hardinge and three of the Bakhtiari Chiefs, on the subject of the relations of the latter and of their tribe with the Oil Concessions Syndicate in Persia and with His Majesty's Vice-Consul at Ahwaz.

I am, &c.
(Signed) LOUIS MALLET.

[20077]

No. 271.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received June 11.)

(No. 138.)

Sir,

Gulahek, May 29, 1908.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 135 of the 22nd instant, I have the honour to report that the Russian Minister has been so good as to inform me of the following details of the recent negotiations for the settlement of the Russo-Persian frontier incidents:—

The Viceroy of the Caucasus, acting on instructions from St. Petersburg, sent an ultimatum to the Governor of Azerbaijan informing him that, unless the demands of the Russian Government for the punishment of the murderers of the officer near Belyasevar, for the payment of indemnities on various counts, for the return of rifles stolen by Shahsevens from Russian frontier guards during the past two years, and for assurances that the Shahsevens would be held in strict control in future, the force under General Snarsky would proceed to exact reparation. The news of the ultimatum, which was to expire on the 22nd instant (9th, o.s.), only reached Tehran on the 19th instant (6th, o.s.), and caused great consternation. On that afternoon the Minister for Foreign Affairs called at the Russian Legation to ask M. de Hartwig to obtain a further respite. M. de Hartwig replied that the Governor of the Caucasus was acting on orders from St. Petersburg and he could not very well interfere. Late the same evening M. de Hartwig was invited to go to the Palace, but the Chamberlain who brought the message could not inform him for what reason his presence was required. M. de Hartwig represented that his arrival after 10 o'clock at night would certainly be misconstrued by the public, and he suggested that, in the circumstances, he should wait on the Shah the following morning. A little after midnight he received a letter from Mushir-ed-Dowleh informing him that, at the express wishes of the Ministry and Assembly, the Shah desired to request him to convey a personal message from His Imperial Majesty to the Czar asking for an extension of the time allowed, and promising that, if a reasonable interval were given, the Persian Government would fulfil all the Russian demands. At his audience the following morning M. de Hartwig promised to forward the Shah's request to St. Petersburg, and on the 22nd instant (9th, o.s.) was able to announce that the Russian Government were ready to grant a delay of fourteen days, counting from the 20th (7th, o.s.), during which the Persian Government must carry out their promises.

The Persian Government appeared to be making every effort to satisfy the Russian demands, for they borrowed 17,000 tomans from the Imperial Bank of Persia on the security of the passport fees, and appointed Rahim Khan, the notorious Kurdish Chieftain, to capture and punish the Shahseven offenders. It seems to me improbable that they will succeed in so short a time. The money question alone will be a great

* Also to Mr. Preece.

† No. 269.

difficulty, seeing that the compensation demanded for the families of soldiers murdered by Shahsevens during the past six months amounts to 30,000 roubles, or nearly the whole of the sum advanced by the Imperial Bank of Persia, and that there is, besides this, the indemnity to the widow of the murdered officer, and also the cost of moving General Snarsky's troops to the frontier. No doubt Rahim Khan will succeed in extracting large payments from the Shahseven Chiefs, who are reputed to be wealthy, but it by no means follows that any considerable proportion will find its way to the Imperial Treasury.

On the evening of the 26th instant Mushir-ed-Dowleh called at the Legation. He said he had just left the Russian Minister, and had found him inclined to be unyielding. Persian official accounts showed that the Russian officer had brought his fate on himself, for he had fired the first shot, and that in killing him the Shahsevens might be said to have acted in self-defence. In any case, the Russian troops had more than avenged his death, for they had burnt at least two villages besides Belyasevar, and had killed a large number of people, and done damage to property said to exceed 40,000 tomans. The Persian Government, in the circumstances, thought that the only just means of arriving at a settlement was by appointing a Joint Commission of Inquiry. M. de Hartwig had declined to listen to such a suggestion, and had insisted on the general acceptance of the Russian terms, five of which he described as absolutely essential. Mushir-ed-Dowleh asked me what I thought the Persian Government should do. I said that my knowledge of the facts was too vague for me to express any opinion on the rights and wrongs of the case. The Shahsevens appeared to have been attacking and killing the Russian frontier posts in order to steal the rifles, and the Persian Government had done nothing, as his Excellency admitted, to put an end to these outrages, in spite of the oft-repeated protests of the Russian Legation. At last came the murder of the Russian officer, which caused the pent-up exasperation to vent itself, and, if the Persian accounts were correct, the Cossacks had "seen red." The Russian's want of self-control might have put them in the wrong at the last, but the original fault lay with the Persian Government. However that might be, the Russian Government was evidently in earnest, and, as Persia was perfectly powerless, it seemed to me that her best course would be to agree in principle to the Russian demands by making every effort to fulfil them in the stipulated time, to conciliate the friendly feeling of Russia, and trust to her sense of justice to come to a final and equitable settlement. As for a Mixed Commission, I rather sympathized with the Russian Minister if he had declined, as I understood, to entertain the proposal at present, for experience in Persia showed that they rarely led to any definite result.

I told M. de Hartwig, who happened to call on me the next morning, of the advice I had ventured to give, and he was good enough to express his thanks for it. From his language I was led to think that he was quite conscious that the excesses of the Cossacks had put him in a rather awkward position, and that the severe terms of the ultimatum were scarcely justifiable. He cannot conceal from himself that the Persians have legitimate grounds for indignation, if not, indeed, counter-claims for compensation, and he would, I think, be glad to find a way of retreat from the difficult position in which the action of the military authorities has placed him, even if it should eventually involve agreeing to a Mixed Commission as suggested by Mushir-ed-Dowleh.

In spite of the deep feeling against Russia, the speeches in the Assembly have hitherto been strictly moderate; but, in view of the intense excitement of the public, I think it unlikely that Persian Ministers will venture to accede formally to the Russian demands.

I have, &c.
(Signed) CHARLES M. MARLING.

[20069]

No. 272.

Mr. O'Beirne to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received June 11.)

(No. 264.)

Sir,

St. Petersburg, June 8, 1908.

WITH reference to previous correspondence in regard to the proposed participation by Messrs. Stevens in a Navigation Concession on Lake Urumia granted by the Persian Government to Prince Imam Kuli Mirza, I have the honour to transmit herewith copy of an *aide-memoire* which I have received from the Russian Government

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3 F

stating the reasons for which they consider it preferable to decline Messrs. Stevens' request.

(Confidential.)

I may add that the head of the competent Department in the Ministry for Foreign Affairs told me that the Russian Government attached a great deal of importance to this Concession, and I understood him to say that there was some question of an eventual Russian monopoly of navigation on the lake.

I have, &c.
(Signed) HUGH O'BEIRNE.

Inclosure in No. 272.

Aide-mémoire communicated by Russian Government, May 24 (June 6), 1908.

PAR un aide-mémoire en date du 18 (31) Mars, année courante, l'Ambassade Britannique a bien voulu s'enquérir auprès du Ministère Impérial des Affaires Étrangères si le Gouvernement Russe trouve des objections à ce que la Raison Sociale Stevens, de Manchester, s'associe à une Concession de Navigation sur le Lac d'Urmiah, donnée par le Gouvernement Persan au Prince Imam Kouli Mirza.

En réponse, le Ministère a l'honneur de faire savoir à l'Ambassade que, dans l'opinion du Gouvernement Russe, une application rigoureuse des termes de la Convention du 18 (31) Août, 1907, peut seule contribuer à atteindre les buts que les deux Parties Contractantes avaient en vue en concluant cet Accord, et la moindre déviation de ce principe ne pourrait qu'en compromettre le succès; en outre, une observation insuffisamment stricte des stipulations de la Convention pourrait former, à son avis, des précédents regrettables, également désavantageux tant pour la Grande-Bretagne que pour la Russie. C'est en vertu de ces considérations que le Gouvernement Impérial s'est soigneusement abstenu jusqu'au moment actuel, et compte s'abstenir à l'avenir, de toute demande de Concessions en faveur de sujets de quelque Puissance que ce soit dans la zone mentionnée à l'Article 2 de la Convention.

En conséquence, attendu que le Lac d'Urmiah rentre en entier dans la zone prévue à l'Article 1^{er} de la Convention, le Gouvernement Impérial considère qu'il serait préférable que la demande de la Maison Stevens par rapport à la participation à la Concession de Navigation sur le Lac d'Urmiah fût déclinée.

Saint-Petersbourg, le 24 Mai (6 Juin), 1908.

[20261]

No. 273.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received June 12.)

(No. 138.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Tehran, June 12, 1908.

A RAPID development in the situation here has taken place and the excitement against the Shah is becoming very serious. M. de Hartwig, who feels great alarm for His Majesty's safety, has suggested to M. Isvolsky at Reval by telegraph that the Russian and British Legations be instructed to make an official representation to the Persian Minister for Foreign Affairs to the effect that the two Powers are pledged to maintain the present dynasty, and that in the event of its becoming necessary to protect the Shah by force they are prepared to do so.

The view of the Russian Minister is that the present agitation is being engineered by Zil-es-Sultan, and is really fictitious; that Zil is aiming at the Regency and eventually the Throne. Further, he thinks that the Ministers and Parliament are quite ready to believe that the Shah will work honestly on constitutional lines and have no real feeling against His Majesty.

My views do not coincide with those of M. de Hartwig. I am of opinion that the conviction of the Shah's innate hostility to the Constitution is ineradicable in the popular mind. The people are anxious to be rid of him, and the Zil-es-Sultan is accepted by them as offering the best hope for a restoration of order. I must however admit that the Zil-es-Sultan is taking every advantage of the opportunity to further his own ends.

That such a declaration as that proposed by the Russian Minister would crush the

agitation in Tehran is, I think, quite possible, but it would be for a time only and its effect would probably be merely exasperating in the provinces, and I have no faith whatever in the possibility of a permanent reconciliation between the Shah and the people being brought about by it. As the Russian Minister says, however, it is more than probable that Zil-es-Sultan would prove a far more formidable enemy than the present Shah to the Constitution.

After explaining my views to the Russian Minister I told him that, in my opinion, His Majesty's Government would not hold themselves pledged to support the dynasty, much less an individual Sovereign, by their action in recognizing the successive heirs to the Persian Throne. M. Isvolsky had stated moreover that the Russian Government is "comparatively indifferent which Shah reigns," so long as order is restored (see Sir A. Nicolson's telegram No. 267 of the 25th December, 1907).

I do not anticipate that the Enjumens will make an armed attack on the Shah, but they have again collected in crowds at the Assembly and Mosque and talk of deposing him by vote of Parliament. The Cossack Brigade have informed their officers that, though they will defend the Shah, they will not attack the people, so I do not think that His Majesty will take the initiative.

I am informed by the Russian Minister that Chapchal will tender his resignation.

I have consistently discouraged the idea of taking bast in the British Legation, which has been talked of, and now the people are thinking of going to the German Legation. I hear that the German Minister gives ambiguous replies when approached.

Following is very confidential.

The Russian Minister looks on Zil-es-Sultan as inimical to Russia and too friendly to us, and this is one reason for his wish for a joint representation to prevent His Highness' accession to power.

It is not realized either by the Russian Minister that any move made by Russia on behalf of the Shah defeats its own end, such is the Persian detestation of Russia, and so strong is the conviction that Russia desires to assist His Majesty to crush the popular party.

The proposed joint Declaration would, in my opinion, greatly intensify the distrust of us engendered by the recent Agreement, and it is probable that the popular party would be driven to turn to Germany for help.

[20262]

No. 274.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received June 12.)

(No. 139.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Tehran, June 12, 1908.

MY telegram No. 128 of the 30th ultimo. Incidents on the Russo-Persian frontier.

According to communication made to me by the Russian Minister, all Russia's demands have been accepted by the Persian Government.

The Foreign Affairs Committee discussed at one moment the advisability of invoking, in virtue of provision in the German Commercial Treaty, the intervention of Germany.

[20261]

No. 275.

Sir Edward Grey to Mr. O'Beirne.

(No. 159.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Foreign Office, June 12, 1908.

PERSIAN situation.

With reference to the telegram No. 138 from Tehran, Mr. Marling's views have my entire concurrence.

In discussing the situation with the Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs you should inform his Excellency that His Majesty's Government consider it of the greatest importance that the policy of the two Governments should be in perfect accord, but that any action is strongly deprecated by us which might have the appearance of intervening in the internal affairs of Persia. His Majesty's Government are therefore unable to agree to make the communication which the Russian Minister has suggested.

There is much similarity in the present situation to that which prevailed in the

month of December last, and His Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires at Tehran will be instructed to follow the line of action indicated to him on the 25th December, in which M. Isvolsky concurred, subject to a single amendment, which was subsequently accepted by His Majesty's Government. (Refer to Sir A. Nicolson's telegram No. 269 of last year.)

We would suggest that the Russian Minister should receive similar instructions.

His Majesty's Government ardently desire to witness the restoration of order in Persia, but the only way in which this can be accomplished is by the formation of a Government to which the Persian people will give their full confidence and support. This consummation can only be attained if the situation is allowed to develop without external interference. We are of opinion that, though the situation might be momentarily relieved by a joint declaration that the two Powers intend to maintain the present dynasty or Government, serious difficulties in the future would be thereby created both for ourselves and Russia, and that no solution would be afforded of the problem of Persian government. Moreover, much resentment would be aroused in Persia against the two Powers, and the Persians would be driven to turn to a third Power for support. The best way of securing our common interests in this part of the world is by acting in such a fashion that the Persians will recognize us as their protectors. On the other hand, any attempt to impose on them any particular form of government will undoubtedly endanger those interests.

[19675]

No. 276.

Foreign Office to India Office.

Sir,

Foreign Office, June 12, 1908.

I AM directed by Secretary Sir E. Grey to transmit to you, to be laid before the Secretary of State for India, the accompanying copy of a despatch from His Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires at Tehran,* inclosing copy of a despatch from His Majesty's Consul-General at Bushire on the subject of Norwegian Consular representation at that port.

Sir E. Grey would be glad to learn the views of Viscount Morley respecting the proposal contained in Major Cox' despatch that it might be advisable to approach the Japanese and Swedish Governments with a view to the appointment of British subjects as Consular Representatives of those countries.

I am, &c.
(Signed) LOUIS MALLET.

[19453]

No. 277.

Foreign Office to India Office.

Sir,

Foreign Office, June 12, 1908.

WITH reference to previous correspondence on the subject of a red oxide concession on the Island of Sirri in the Persian Gulf, I am directed by Secretary Sir E. Grey to transmit to you, to be laid before the Secretary of State for India, the accompanying copy of a telegram from His Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires at Tehran.†

I am to state that Sir E. Grey would be glad to receive an expression of Lord Morley's views on the suggestion that the representative of the British Company should apply for a concession to the Sheikh of Shargah through the British authorities.

I am, &c.
(Signed) LOUIS MALLET.

[19571]

No. 278.

Foreign Office to Persian Transport Company.

Sir,

Foreign Office, June 12, 1908.

I AM directed by Secretary Sir E. Grey to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 5th instant respecting the situation which has arisen in connection with the erection of buildings by your Company at Shellilieh, near Shuster.

* No. 242.

† No. 236.

I am to inform you, in reply, that the circumstances of your complaint have been communicated by telegraph to His Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires at Tehran, who has been authorized to take such action in the matter as he may deem advisable.

I am, &c.
(Signed) LOUIS MALLET.

[20395]

No. 279.

Mr. Hawkins to Sir T. Jackson.—(Communicated by Sir T. Jackson, June 13.)

My dear Jackson,

Tehran, May 30, 1908.

Kermanshah Customs.—There is no doubt whatever that the Russians have a right to receive and remit customs dues at Kermanshah. The question is, when will the Russian bank open a branch there? Mr. Rabino's opinion is that they are in no hurry, and it is undesirable to take steps to substitute the receipts of another southern port until the actual necessity arises. His opinion is probably influenced by his possible connection in the future with the proposed German bank, possibly by his marked propensity for letting things drift. Any way, I can see no force in his arguments, and my information is that they will open very shortly, so we have approached Mr. Mornard, the Belgian Head of the Customs, who gives me the impression of being a steady, reliable man. Mr. Mornard, with whom I had a very friendly talk, recognized the justice of our contention, and told me two days ago that he would approach the Minister of Finance on the matter. Unfortunately the Minister of Finance, Sani-ed-Dowleh, has again resigned, having been attacked violently in the Medjliss, one point on which he was gone for being that he had admitted the bank's claim on the Amir Bahadur Jang as a Government debt. However, the matter will be proceeded with when there is a Finance Minister.

I have suggested to Mr. Mornard that Bushire would be more satisfactory to us. The receipts for this port last year amounted to something over 160,000*l.*, and 70,000*l.* per annum would about cover our claims for interest, both direct and indirect. At Mohammerah, the receipts of which are remitted by Lynch, we have no branch. The Bunder Abbas receipts, which are not very large, are remitted to the Tehran Government by Arbab Jamshid. Bunder Abbas is a place where a white man cannot exist.

Speaking about Mohammerah reminds me that I have just heard that D'Arcy has struck oil at a place some little distance from Mohammerah, which will no doubt benefit largely from the discovery, and, if assured, we may have to consider the question of opening there.

The Russian aim in handling the receipts at Kermanshah is doubtless to endeavour to retain not only the service of their Government loans, but to exercise pressure for their indirect claims, which are considerable. If they succeed in doing so, and we are able to retain say 70,000*l.* per annum for our claims, the Persian Government will be more straitened in means than ever. That is a very strong reason for moving now in the question of substitution rather than waiting until they actually feel the pinch.

I can see no way out of the *impasse* except by a judicious increase in taxation or by a small loan. Increased taxation would be to my mind preferable, but it is open to the objection that the results would not be felt for some time. I am referring to increase on certain articles of import. I do not think that the proposed increase of tax on sugar or tea, which it is estimated to produce 400,000*l.* per annum, would lead to much decrease in the consumption, as both articles are so universally and largely used by all classes that they have become one of the necessities of native life, but the effects would possibly not be felt for some time, as imports under present tariff would be hurried in before the change could equitably be made.

The trouble *re* a loan would be that, unless it were possible to have some foreign control over the expenditure, the proceeds would be frittered away.

Their pride and distrust of anything approaching foreign control makes any arrangement of the kind difficult to attain.

A scheme that has been privately discussed is the raising of a small loan, say of 500,000*l.* on the security of the proposed surtax on sugar and tea, to enable them to bridge over the time until that surtax was effective, the proceeds to be applied in the main to the proper payment and officering of a force of either gendarmerie or soldiery to enable the Government to enforce the taxes in the country.

I think that the Russian and British Governments would be disposed to advance the money if the guarantee against wastage could be arranged, but the Persians have now a profound distrust of both Powers, in view especially of the late Convention.

[1580]

3 G

Customs.—The customs receipts for the past year (1907-8) amount to 30,973,359 krams, say 600,000*l.*, an increase over 1906-7 of 5,031,681 krams, say 100,000*l.*

Of the total receipts, those from the Persian Gulf amount to say 170,000*l.*, and from Arabistan (Mohammerah, &c.) 33,000*l.*

The amount necessary to pay the coupon on the Government loans of 1900 to 1902 from Russia amount to say 180,000*l.*

It is only reasonable to suppose that there will be a falling off in customs receipts for the present year.

Yours very truly,
(Signed) V. A. CÆSAR HAWKINS,
Visiting Director.

[20422]

No. 280.

Mr. O'Beirne to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received June 13.)

(No. 95.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

St. Petersburg, June 13, 1908.

SITUATION in Persia. Your telegram No. 159 of the 12th instant.

I conveyed to M. Isvolsky the views expressed in your above-mentioned telegram, of which I read the greater part to him. M. de Hartwig had telegraphed to his Excellency suggesting, as the only means of preventing the Shah from being dethroned, that the two Representatives should make a communication to Persian Minister for Foreign Affairs (and also to the Medjliss) in sense indicated in Mr. Marling's telegram No. 138 of the 12th instant. After discussing the matter at some length, M. Isvolsky said that the most disturbing feature of the question for him was to see that, in spite of the recent Convention and of all that had passed between the two Governments, there still existed the old disagreement between our respective countries in Persia. Russia was anxious to maintain the present Shah, who was more favourable to her, on the throne, while Great Britain desired to follow a line of policy of which the result would be the accession to power of the Zil-es-Sultan, whose sympathies were British. I replied that all His Majesty's Government desired was to avoid intervention; that the substitution of the Zil-es-Sultan for the Shah might have been of advantage to us before the Convention of last year, but could be so no longer; and that he might feel perfectly certain that His Majesty's Government had not the faintest wish to see such a substitution take place.

Eventually M. Isvolsky having promised to examine the question more closely to-night, I sent him, at his request, a summary of the views expressed in your telegram under reply.

(Repeated to Tehran.)

[20416]

No. 281.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received June 13.)

(No. 140.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Tehran, June 13, 1908.

SITUATION in Tehran. My telegram No. 137 of the 9th instant.

Apparently, at threat of the Shah to use cannon against them, the Assembly have persuaded the Enjumens to leave the Mosque.

There have been no disorders in the town throughout the agitation.

[20421]

No. 282.

Mr. G. Barclay to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received June 14.)

(No. 141.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Constantinople, June 14, 1908.

FOLLOWING from Mr. Wratislaw, Urumia, No. 36, dated the 11th instant, and received to-day:—

"The Acting Russian Vice-Consul and I made a joint representation to Tahir Pasha to-day regarding the outrages committed by Turkish Kurds, pointing out the responsibility of the Turkish Government. He seems entirely indifferent to the suffering caused, and merely gave us vague assurances.

"The Kurds have again cut the telegraph, so I have had to send this telegram to Tabreez for transmission.

"A large force of Kurds, probably the same as took Sheitanabad, attacked Ardeschai, a village situated 11 miles south-east of Urumia, to-day; but so far their attacks have been repulsed with loss. They have, however, sacked neighbouring villages and perpetrated numerous outrages.

"It was decided to-day, at a meeting of the French, British, American, and Russian missionaries, to address a letter to the Consuls asking them to urge the authorities to put an end to a situation which has become intolerable. They say that it is dangerous for them to go outside the town.

"As long as the devastation of the country, with the connivance or, at any rate, through the negligence of the Turks, continues, it seems to me to be worse than useless to talk of renewing the negotiations for the delimitation of the frontier."

[20669]

No. 283.

Mr. O'Beirne to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received June 15.)

(No. 96.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

St. Petersburg, June 15, 1908.

PERSIAN situation. My immediately preceding telegram.

I have as yet received no definite reply from M. Isvolsky to my communication, and his Excellency hopes that the circumstances will not necessitate an immediate decision.

From his language in further conversations which I have had with him, I find that he is inclined to suggest some kind of joint warning to Zil-es-Sultan, instead of a declaration of the kind proposed by M. de Hartwig, and he refers to a similar warning given by the two Powers in 1907. Our recognition of the Valiahad as successor, he argues, binds us to some extent; he contends that we are thereby laid under certain moral obligations to the Shah, though he admits that such recognition is obviously not the same thing as a pledge to maintain the Shah or his son on the throne.

The Zil-es-Sultan's accession to power would, he says, be interpreted here as a triumph of British over Russian influence, and he is plainly anxious to prevent any possibility of it.

(Sent to Tehran.)

[20663]

No. 284.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received June 15.)

(No. 141.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Tehran, June 15, 1908.

SITUATION. Telegram No. 95 from St. Petersburg.

Following is Confidential:—

From the Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs language to Mr. O'Beirne, it seems clear that M. de Hartwig is reporting that Zil-es-Sultan's pretensions are at least countenanced by His Majesty's Legation, and it would not surprise me if he produced a lengthy list of alleged proofs. His reports have no foundation whatever. Though no doubt Zil-es-Sultan tries to create the contrary impression, he knows perfectly well that in any design against the Shah he will receive no support from me. As I understand it to be the wish of His Majesty's Government (see your telegram No. 210 of the 26th December, 1907), I have maintained merely friendly non-political relations with him.

The Shah will probably desire to remove Zil-es-Sultan from Shiraz, and Fars will thereby be plunged into renewed disorder. I should wish to try to prevent it, but if you deem it advisable will desist from doing so.

The Russian Minister has given the Shah, in his struggle with the Medjliss, constant and almost avowed support. This is in marked contrast with the attitude of absolute neutrality of His Majesty's Legation, which has been so rigidly observed as to

create in some quarters a belief that the constitutional movement has not the sympathy of His Majesty's Government, and is likely to impair the influence for good possessed by His Majesty's Government.

There is ground for believing that the Shah, on the security of the crown jewels, is borrowing money from the Russian Bank, as he did in December last.

[20422]

No. 285.

Sir Edward Grey to Mr. O'Beirne.

(No. 161.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

PERSIA.

Foreign Office, June 15, 1908.

Your language respecting the Zil-es-Sultan, as reported in your telegram No. 95 of the 13th instant, is entirely approved by His Majesty's Government. There are now absolutely no political relations between us and the Zil-es-Sultan, and, unless an agreement had previously been come to with Russia, we should never give our support to him or to any other candidate for the throne. It was agreed last December that, if the Shah should seek help or refuge, his life should be saved, but that no intervention should take place with the object of keeping him on the throne.

I am convinced, for the reasons which I gave in my former telegram, that the best course is to limit our action in this way; otherwise we may become burdened with the responsibility of maintaining in Persia an unpopular Government which is resented by the people. Such a position would have a most unfavourable effect upon the prestige and influence in Persia of both Powers. I have given expression to these views in conversation with the Russian Ambassador.

I request that you will make a similar communication to M. Isvolsky, and will avail yourself of the opportunity to point out that third parties have an obvious interest in sowing distrust between ourselves and Russia. We trust, however, that any reports that he may hear to the effect that we are encouraging the Zil-es-Sultan in his pretensions to the throne will not receive credence.

[20811]

No. 286.

Sir Edward Grey to Count de Salis.

(No. 160.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, June 15, 1908.

THE German Ambassador, in the course of a visit to-day, asked me whether I had seen Sir Charles Hardinge since his return from Reval.

I said I had just seen him, and he had given me a Memorandum of all that had passed, which, however, I had not yet had time to read through. But I told Count Metternich that the things which had been discussed were matters of detail, affecting such countries as Persia, and arising out of the Anglo-Russian Convention, also points relating to Macedonia. These were all things the nature of which was known to other Governments.

I thought we were practically in agreement about Macedonia, and I hoped that notes would now be drawn up and sent to the other Powers explaining our joint views.

I observed that some of the press in Germany seemed to have been displeased because the King was meeting the Czar at Reval. This was very unreasonable, seeing that the German Emperor had already met the Czar several times.

Count Metternich admitted that there was no justification for the dissatisfaction, but there was in some quarters a certain amount of apprehension regarding the King's visit.

I told him there was no reason for any apprehension, and certainly no new Agreement was going to be sprung upon the world as a result of the King's visit to Reval. I thought, however, that the effect of the visit had been very good, for both sides apparently were very pleased with it.

I am, &c.
(Signed) E. GREY.

[20812]

No. 287.

Sir Edward Grey to Count de Salis.

(No. 161.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, June 15, 1908.

COUNT METTERNICH told me to-day that he thought the news from Persia was very bad.

I said it was not satisfactory. But last Christmas we were told that the Shah's Government might not last twenty-four hours.

Count Metternich observed that this time it was apparently the Shah who was going to do away with the Medjliss.

I told him that this was what people said, but for all that the trouble might pass away again, as it had done before.

I am, &c.
(Signed) E. GREY.

[19680]

No. 288.

Sir Edward Grey to Mr. O'Beirne.

(No. 161.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, June 15, 1908.

WITH reference to your despatch No. 233 of the 19th ultimo on the subject of the security for the advances of the Imperial Bank of Persia and the Banque des Prêts to the Persian Government, I transmit to you the accompanying copy of a despatch from His Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires at Tehran,* from which it appears that the Administrator of Customs is willing to make arrangements whereby the service of the advances made by the Imperial Bank will be secured on the receipts of one of the Gulf ports.

I have to request that you will mention to the Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs the lines on which this question will probably be settled.

I am, &c.
(Signed) E. GREY.

[20731]

No. 289.

India Office to Foreign Office.—(Received June 16.)

THE Under-Secretary of State for India presents his compliments to the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and, by direction of Viscount Morley, forwards herewith, for the information of the Secretary of State, and with reference to the letter from the Foreign Office of the 20th ultimo, copy of a telegram to the Viceroy, dated the 12th June, regarding the Sheikh of Mohammerah and the Bakhtiari Khans.

India Office, June 15, 1908.

Inclosure in No. 289.

Viscount Morley to the Government of India.

(Telegraphic.) P.

India Office, June 12, 1908.

PLEASE see despatch No. 97 from His Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires at Tehran and his telegram No. 57 to you, regarding the Bakhtiari Khans and Mohammerah.

It is proposed that the general assurances already given should be repeated to the Sheikh, and that he should be informed that they will be regarded as binding in respect of his successors.

Please see despatches of the 5th December, 1902, and the 29th December, 1903, from Sir A. Hardinge.

This should suffice as regards external aggression, coupled with a statement that an infringement of Persian integrity, which His Majesty's Government is pledged to

maintain, would be involved by such aggression. I should be glad to learn your views as to the terms, if any, in which our formal assurance could safely be strengthened, in respect of encroachments by the Tehran Government on the Sheikh's present autonomous status. Having regard to recent unsatisfactory behaviour of Bakhtiari Khans towards British enterprise in their territory, it is thought that they would be likely to use any engagement beyond assurance of friendly sympathy for the purpose of creating difficulties between the Persian Government and ourselves. Your views on the whole subject are requested.

[20814]

No. 290.

Mr. O'Beirne to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received June 16.)

(No. 97.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

St. Petersburg, June 16, 1908.

TURCO-PERSIAN frontier.

During our interview yesterday M. Isvolsky spoke in a serious way of the situation at Urumia. The entire responsibility for what was occurring was attributed by his Excellency to the Turks, and he complained of the insolent attitude of the Turkish officials towards the Russian Acting Vice-Consul. He also mentioned that an attack had been made on a Russian mission in the vicinity of Urumia. He appeared to be considerably annoyed by these events, but at a loss as to the steps which should be taken in reference to them.

[20807]

No. 291.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received June 16.)

(No. 142.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Tehran, June 16, 1908.

POLITICAL situation: My telegram No. 138 of the 12th instant.

The Russian Minister, in reply to M. Isvolsky's request for observations on the communication made by Mr. O'Beirne, has reported that the Shah may be assassinated unless we give him our declared support; that, in consequence of the designs of Zil-es-Sultan, disorders will then arise; and that this is precisely the eventuality it was intended to avert by making our agreement for the recognition of successive heirs to the throne.

M. de Hartwig asserts that the Zil-es-Sultan would at once abandon us if he became Regent or ascended the throne, and would turn to the Germans, with whom he would contract a loan, giving a guarantee on his personal fortune. According to the Russian Minister this amounts to 60,000,000 tomans, which he asserts are invested in India. I believe that this figure is a gross exaggeration, for, as far as my information goes, Zil-es-Sultan has something less than 300,000*l.* in India. Except for the fact that Jelal-ed-Dowleh was constantly at the German Legation, M. de Hartwig would give me no reason for suspecting that Zil-es-Sultan would turn to Germany.

Following is very confidential:—

It appears to me that the Russian Minister is striving to retain his one trump card, namely, the Shah, at all risks, but, if possible, with our co-operation. It seems to me that his argument, especially that the Zil-es-Sultan has German sympathies, is framed in order to give his Government a pretext for urging His Majesty's Government to agree to his proposal for a joint declaration.

On the other hand, it seems to me that the Russian Minister, seeing little hope of bringing about the joint declaration, is giving the Shah advice, and hopes to crush the Enjumens and so secure His Majesty's position. The resolute energy which the Shah is at present displaying against the Enjumens is so unusual as to warrant this belief.

[20796]

No. 292.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received June 16.)

(No. 143.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Tehran, June 16, 1908.

TURCO-PERSIAN frontier: Mr. Wratislaw's telegram No. 36 of the 11th instant.

Similar reports have been received from the Russian Consul, who adds that the Persian Commissioner seems more than ever disinclined to avail himself of the assistance and good offices of the two Consuls. Signs are not wanting here either that the Persian Government view the intention of the two Powers to give effective assistance in the frontier question with distrust.

I am agreed with the Russian Minister that energetic steps should be taken at Constantinople in order to prevent intrusion of a third Power in the question, and that in order to convince Persia of our benevolent intentions such action is particularly desirable at the present moment.

[20796]

No. 293.

Sir Edward Grey to Mr. O'Beirne.

(No. 163.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Foreign Office, June 16, 1908.

TURCO-PERSIAN frontier.

I should be glad to hear M. Isvolsky's views on the subject dealt with in Mr. Marling's telegram No. 143.

[19694]

No. 294.

Sir Edward Grey to Mr. Marling.

(No. 99.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, June 16, 1908.

I HAVE received your despatch No. 128 of the 21st ultimo, relative to the promises obtained from the Persian Minister for Foreign Affairs by the French Minister respecting three matters which he had for some time been negotiating with his Excellency.

With reference to the grant of a subvention for the French school, which was one of the points under discussion, I have to request you to inform me whether, in your opinion, any advantage would be gained by the foundation of an English school at Tehran, which should also receive a subvention from the Persian Government, and, if so, whether such a scheme would have any chance of acceptance.

I am, &c.
(Signed) E. GREY.

[20816]

No. 295.

Mr. G. Barclay to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received June 17.)

(No. 143.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Constantinople, June 16, 1908.

TURCO-PERSIAN frontier.

With reference to Mr. Marling's telegram No. 13 of to-day.

I received a call from the Persian Ambassador this afternoon, who came to draw my attention to the serious state of affairs on the Turco-Persian frontier. The Persian Commissioner had sent him a Report, the substance of which was the same as that of Mr. Wratislaw's telegram No. 36 of the 11th instant, but had added that he himself was in danger personally, and that Urumia was threatened.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs, in an interview which I had with him yesterday, said, on my remarking on the Kurdish depredations, that if the Kurds were to be restrained troops would have to be employed, and Persia would certainly object to this.

[20906]

No. 296

Mr. O'Beirne to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received June 17.)

(No. 98.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

St. Petersburg, June 17, 1908.

YOUR telegram No. 159 of the 12th June: Crisis in Persia.

I am informed by M. Isvolsky that he has prepared instructions for M. de Hartwig to the effect that no declaration can be made such as the latter proposes, but that he should, in conjunction with Mr. Marling, take a similar course to that pursued last December with regard to the Zil-es-Sultan.

M. Isvolsky will ask your concurrence in these instructions, if the Emperor approves them. He says that Mr. Marling's detached attitude with regard to the Shah's difficulties has the effect of promoting the Zil-es-Sultan's cause, and he is strongly of opinion that something must be done to strengthen the Shah's position as the lawful Ruler.

In reply to his Excellency, I said that in the conflict between the Shah and the people Mr. Marling had maintained an attitude of strict neutrality.

[20891]

No. 297.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received June 17.)

(No. 144.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Tehran, June 17, 1908.

RUSSIAN Military Attaché in Seistan

Referring to my telegram No. 48 of the 19th February last, His Majesty's Consul at Turbat-i-Haideri has been informed by his Russian colleague that a Military Attaché in Seistan has been appointed. Apparently he is to replace the dragoman Dantal, who died recently.

Baron von der Flaes, Colonel on the Staff of the General Commanding in Turkestan, has been chosen for the post.

[20903]

No. 298.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received June 17.)

(No. 145.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Tehran, June 17, 1908.

POLITICAL situation. My telegram No. 142 of the 16th June.

Yesterday Zil-es-Sultan held a review of 3,000 troops. Telegrams from Anjumens of all the principal towns have been sent to him, and he has sent replies enjoining patience. According to His Majesty's Acting Consul, his Highness does not meditate more than frightening the Shah by his present attitude.

The Minister for Foreign Affairs evidently thinks badly of the situation, and he tells me that telegrams are pouring in from the provinces denouncing the Shah.

A moderate tone is being adopted by Parliament, which is asking the Shah to bring Alaed-Dowleh and the two other prisoners to trial and so give proofs of his loyalty to the Constitution, but the Shah seems reluctant to assent to this proposal. Two leading members of an important Anjumen have been arrested by His Majesty, and he is giving large extra pay to the Cossacks. Though it is said that he is borrowing money from the Russian Bank, to my certain knowledge a wealthy Persian noble has given him 10,000l.

[21129]

No. 299.

Sir Edward Grey to Mr. O'Beirne.

(Private.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Foreign Office, June 17, 1908.

PERSIA. Nothing has been nor will be done by us to upset the present Shah; nor, in the event of the situation getting beyond the control of the Shah, will the Zil-es-Sultan be encouraged by us in any way. You may give my personal assurance on these points to M. Isvolsky.

Any Government in Persia which is known to depend for support against its own subjects on foreign aid will certainly be held in abhorrence by the Persians. Public opinion in this country would also view such a situation unfavourably. To avoid being committed to interference in the internal affairs of Persia is, therefore, my sole aim.

[20814]

No. 300.

Sir Edward Grey to Mr. O'Beirne.

(No. 164.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Foreign Office, June 17, 1908.

WITH reference to your telegram No. 97 of the 16th instant on the subject of the frontier dispute between Persia and Turkey.

The Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs may be informed that there are difficulties in the way of our assuming the initiative in this matter at present, because British interests are not so far directly affected, and the scene of the dispute is beyond our range of action. The importance of showing the Persians that in case of wanton aggression they will receive support is recognized by His Majesty's Government. If M. Isvolsky decides that the moment has arrived at which pressure must be brought to bear on the Porte, he may count upon loyal and cordial support from us.

[21010]

No. 301.

Messrs. Ellinger and Co. to Foreign Office.—(Received June 18.)

Dear Sir,

28, Oxford Street, Manchester, June 16, 1908.

WITH further reference to ours of the 24th April this year, we beg to inform you that for the reasons which we have explained to you we may find it undesirable in the interests of all concerned to continue working this oxide business through Messrs. Frank C. Strick and Co., Limited, and that we may find it necessary either to place the contract, if we can get the Mountudjar to agree to this, in the hands of Messrs. Andrew Weir and Co., of 6, Lloyd's Avenue, London, who have steamers trading regularly with the Gulf, or, failing this, to undertake to sell ourselves on behalf of the Mountudjar. We shall be obliged if you will inform the Legation at Tehran of this, so that they may be acquainted with the state of affairs, as in the present political position in Persia we think it is desirable we should be in a position to inform the Mountudjar that the British Legation in Tehran and His Majesty's Government are cognizant of the fact that the contract may not continue in the hands of Messrs. Frank C. Strick and Co., Limited, and that this change in our plans will not interfere with the benevolent support which he was led to understand he would receive from His Majesty's Legation in Tehran in case of foreign interference with his concession at Ormuz.

We are, &c.

(Signed) ELLINGER AND Co.

[21050]

No. 302.

Mr. G. Barclay to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received June 18.)

(No. 144.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Constantinople, June 18, 1908.

I HAVE received the following from Mr. Wratistaw at Urumia, No. 35, dated the 9th June, and received here to-day:—

"Tahir Pasha is expected to arrive here this evening.

"The Acting Russian Vice-Consul had an interview to-day with the Persian Commissioner, who affirmed that he had never received instructions to ask our opinion with regard to the proposals which he is to put before the Turkish Commissioner. My own opinion is that it would be injudicious to press this point too closely."

[21129]

No. 302².*Mr. O'Beirne to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received June 18.)*

(Telegraphic.) P.

St. Petersburg, June 18, 1908.

M. ISVOLSKY, to whom I communicated the contents of your telegram of yesterday, readily accepts your assurance. The difficulty, however, lies in the fact that his Excellency believes that if we continue to follow a policy of complete abstention and neutrality, such a course will contribute towards bringing the Zil-es-Sultan to power, and this is an eventuality to which he is strongly opposed. Public opinion in Russia would, he says, bitterly resent it for the reasons which I gave in my telegram No. 96 of the 15th instant, and the effect of our Agreement would at once be thereby destroyed. M. Isvolsky regards the question in a very serious light, as he says that it reveals a dangerous disagreement between the two Powers. His Excellency replies as follows to the arguments which I use as to the consequences which would arise from interfering in the internal affairs of Persia. In the first place, he says that the present situation amounts to an attack by the Zil-es-Sultan and the revolutionary elements on the legitimate authority, and that it is not a conflict between the Shah and the people. In the second place, he maintains that no action amounting to formal interference is needed, and that it would be sufficient if the two Powers gave it to be understood that they stand for the maintenance of the Shah's legitimate authority; this could be done through their two Representatives at Tehran. His Excellency adds that, considering the predominant position of Great Britain and Russia in Persia, this is the least that they can do, and, should they not do it, the door will be opened to all kinds of intrigues and plots.

I fear that our good relations may be affected if we continue to follow a line which M. Isvolsky considers favourable to the Zil-es-Sultan.

[21051]

No. 303.

Mr. G. Barclay to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received June 19.)

(No. 145.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Constantinople, June 18, 1908.

FOLLOWING from Mr. Wratislaw, Urumia, No. 38, dated the 15th June, and received to-day:—

"Tahir Pasha came to see me this evening and told me that he had arrested a number of Persian villagers who confessed that they had taken part in the recent Kurdish raids. He proposed a number of measures for the restoration of tranquillity, which seem to be sound, and he has asked us to advise the Persian Commissioner to concur in them, which we will do."

[21146]

No. 304.

Mr. G. Barclay to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received June 19.)

(No. 146.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Constantinople, June 19, 1908.

FOLLOWING from Mr. Wratislaw, Urumia, No. 37, dated the 15th June and received to-day:—

"The Kurds, who are massed on the hills to the north of the town, are preventing the repair of the telegraph wire and have killed one and wounded another operator."

"On the 12th instant the Persian Commissioner invited Tahir Pasha, the Russian Vice-Consul, and myself to assist at an inquiry he was holding into the cause of the dispute; Tahir did not come himself, but sent Mendouh. Evidence was given by a large number of villagers that they had been attacked and robbed by a large force of Mergaver and Ushnu Kurds. This is, I believe, true, but in some cases the raiders were Persians assisted by Sunnis and Kurds who have settled temporarily in the western part of the Baranduz district."

"Yesterday the Russian Vice-Consul and I took Tahir Pasha for a ride through the surrounding country. He had denied that there had been any raiding, so I asked him to accompany us, and we went to the Christian village of Batakud (?), which he had to acknowledge had been completely plundered, and we proved to him that women

had been ravished, three men killed, and the churches broken into and looted. We then went on to Ardeshai, south-east of Urumia, which is now deserted, but we were able to show him the corpses of a number of Kurds who had been killed in the attack. We then rode through a large tract of country which is entirely deserted and found traces of Kurdish activity on every hand. Tahir Pasha was forced to admit that a raid had taken place, but declared that no Turkish Kurds had taken part in it and that it had been organized by the Persian in order to discredit him.

"To the north the situation has again become extremely serious. The Governor of Salmas has reported that three days ago the Turkish General Yaver visited Som (?) and told the Kurds that henceforth it and Kale Charik belonged to Turkey. Tahir's attitude is, in my opinion, most unsatisfactory; he goes on promising to intervene, but I cannot see the slightest results."

"The town of Urumia itself is quiet at present, though there have been some slight disturbances. Yesterday a number of cattle were lifted less than 2 miles away."

[21149]

No. 305.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received June 19.)

(No. 146. Very Confidential.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Tehran, June 19, 1908.

I HAVE received only to-day telegrams Nos. 96 and 98 from St. Petersburg respecting the proposed joint warning to Zil-es-Sultan. I am rather apprehensive of result of such action. The effect desired by Russia will be produced by any joint action whatever, for it will be interpreted as a declaration of the two Governments in favour of maintaining the Shah whatever language may be used, and the belief of the people in British friendship would be still further tried by it.

Zil-es-Sultan, who is very shrewd, will, moreover, soon guess that Russia has been unable to induce His Majesty's Government to depart from their policy of non-intervention, and he does not believe that Russia will act alone. The effect of the warning on him would consequently be very transitory.

The Shah's position will become precarious as soon as it is discovered that the Russians are playing a game of bluff (which must happen sooner or later), while we may be suspected by the Russians of having betrayed the Shah.

[19943]

No. 306.

Mr. Mallet to Medhi Khan.

Dear Mehdi Khan,

Foreign Office, June 19, 1908.

I AM much obliged for your letter of the 6th instant, inclosing notes on the principal points of your observations of the preceding day respecting the frontier questions with Russia and Turkey.

His Majesty's Government have since heard that the Persian Government have taken the wise course of accepting all the Russian demands.

With regard to the Turkish Frontier Commission, His Majesty's Government consider that the best course would be to send a Commission to Constantinople, as there does not appear to be much hope of a settlement on the spot.

I am, &c.

(Signed) LOUIS MALLET.

[21374]

No. 307.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received June 20.)

(No. 147.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Tehran, June 20, 1908.

POLITICAL situation. My telegram No. 145 of the 17th instant.

No satisfactory reply has been made by the Shah to the demand made by Parliament for a proof of his intention to adhere to the Constitution, and His Majesty seems indisposed to make one.

It is reported that 300 men have left Tabreez to support the Parliament, and it is said that at Ispahan a contingent is preparing to start.

It is probable that this is less alarming than would appear at first sight, but an impression may be produced upon the Shah.

The Enjumens are reassembling at the mosque to-day. Bazaars have been closed for the last week, but the town is quiet.

[21671]

No. 308.

Sir Edward Grey to Mr. O'Beirne.

(No. 172.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Foreign Office, June 20, 1908.

PERSIA. With reference to your private telegram of yesterday's date, and your telegrams Nos. 97 and 98.

Two telegrams from M. Isvolsky, which are practically identical in substance with those referred to above, have been communicated to me by the Russian Ambassador.

If the Minister for Foreign Affairs considers it necessary that some action should be taken, I am ready to send instructions to His Majesty's Representative at Tehran to join his Russian colleague in addressing to the Zil-es-Sultan a warning similar to that given last Christmas. If this action is adopted, the Representatives of the two Powers should inform the Shah of the step taken, and should advise His Majesty, in the interests of his own security on the Throne, to abstain from acting in a manner hostile to the Constitutional party and the Medjliss, or at all events not to expect to be protected by either of the two Powers from any consequences which may ensue from such action.

If, as M. Isvolsky fears, silence may receive the interpretation that we are favouring the Zil-es-Sultan—a course which we have no desire to adopt—it is also a fact that, at this crisis, silence towards the Shah, combined with a warning to the Zil, may be regarded, when publicity is given to the matter, as the assumption of an attitude hostile to the Constitutional party. It is possible that the Shah himself might place this interpretation on such action.

[21588]

No. 309.

M. Isvolsky to Count Benckendorff.—(Communicated by Count Benckendorff, June 21, 1908.)

(Télégraphique.)

Saint-Petersbourg, le 6 (19) Juin, 1908.

JE vous communique deux télégrammes de M. Hartwig contenant des détails alarmants sur les excès commis par les Kurdes et sur les mouvements des troupes Turques sur territoire Persan.

M. Hartwig et Mr. Marling s'expriment en faveur d'une pression énergique à exercer à Constantinople dans le but de prouver à la Perse que les deux Puissances ne considèrent pas ses intérêts avec indifférence et sont prêtes à relever auprès de la Porte les agissements agressifs de la Turquie. Les deux Représentants pensent que la confiance de la Perse dans l'entente Anglo-Russe s'en verrait notablement fortifiée.

De son côté, Mr. O'Beirne me dit que le Cabinet de Londres partage cette opinion et nous promet l'appui énergique du Gouvernement Britannique pour une pression à exercer sur la Porte. Nous croyons qu'il n'est plus possible de retarder cette démarche.

D'après nos informations, les Kurdes ont en une semaine brûlé huit villages et une église Chrétienne. Les troupes Turques avancent en plein territoire Persan, ils ont occupé Suldus et plusieurs autres points et même apparaissent aussi loin que les districts de Salmas et Somais, au nord d'Urmie.

Les Turcs nient toute solidarité avec les excès des Kurdes. Il est pourtant difficile d'admettre toute excitation du moins indirecte, le nombre des troupes Turques étant tout à fait suffisant pour supprimer les désordres.

Veuillez informer Sir Edward Grey que nous considérons qu'une pression sur la Porte est devenue indispensable, que des instructions dans ce sens ont été expédiées à M. Nélidoff, et que nous espérons qu'il voudra bien donner des instructions dans le même sens au Chargé d'Affaires Britannique.

Nos instructions portent sur les excès des Kurdes et sur les mouvements des

troupes Turques sur territoire Persan. M. Nélidoff est chargé d'ajouter que nous avons ferme espoir que le Gouvernement Ottoman, reconnaissant le bien-fondé de nos plaintes, expédiera aux Commandants Turcs sur place des instructions les plus énergiques.

[21279]

No. 310.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received June 21.)

(No. 148.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Tehran, June 21, 1908.

POLITICAL situation. Your telegram No. 115 of the 20th instant.

I presume that if the proposed joint representation to the Shah were agreed to by the Russian Government, M. de Hartwig and myself would be instructed to make substance thereof known authoritatively in a manner similar to that adopted by us in December 1907, otherwise our action might be represented as having been taken in joint support of the Shah (see my despatch No. 283 of the 31st December, 1907).

As, however, joint action of any kind which might produce the impression of a Declaration in favour of the Shah is out of the question, I am disposed to think that Russian Minister on seeing this will prefer to refrain from such action and to continue to trade on fear of Russian intervention, which is general. It seems to be possible that the Russian Minister, recognizing the danger that the true position of affairs may be revealed, intends to counsel conciliatory attitude to the Shah in the future. He has already hinted to me that this is his intention.

An honest and consistent endeavour on the part of the Russian Legation to induce the Shah to work on constitutional lines, and the conciliation of public opinion towards Russia by effective action in the Turco-Persian frontier dispute is, in my opinion, the sole chance of a peaceable solution.

[21366]

No. 311.

Mr. G. Barclay to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received June 22.)

(No. 340.)

Sir,

Thessalonica, June 14, 1908.

I HAVE the honour to transmit herewith copy of a letter which I have received from the Persian Ambassador at Constantinople, requesting me to furnish him with copies of the notes exchanged between this Embassy and the Sublime Porte and Mirza Mohammed Ali Khan, Special Persian Envoy, in 1847 and 1848, and of the instructions given by this Embassy to Lieutenant-Colonel Williams, British Delegate on the Mixed Commission in 1848.

I have informed his Highness that I would refer the matter to you, as the archives of this Embassy do not go back further than 1852, and I should be glad to know what answer I am to give to Prince Mirza Khan.

I have, &c.

(Signed) G. BARCLAY.

Inclosure in No. 311.

Prince Mirza Riza Khan to Mr. G. Barclay.

*Ambassade de Perse, Constantinople,
le 5 Juin, 1908.*

M. le Ministre,

LE 13 Avril dernier j'ai eu l'honneur d'envoyer à votre Excellence le *pro-memoria* de la Sublime Porte concernant la question de la frontière Turco-Persane. Je viens de recevoir une note du Ministère Impérial des Affaires Étrangères de mon Gouvernement me proposant de prier votre Excellence de vouloir bien donner des ordres à qui de droit à la Chancellerie pour me délivrer les copies des notes échangées entre l'Ambassade de la Grande-Bretagne et la Sublime Porte, ainsi qu'avec Mirza Mohammed Ali Khan, Envoyé Spécial de Perse, pendant les années 1847 et 1848, concernant la ratification du Traité d'Erzeroum entre la Perse et la Turquie.

Je me permets d'ajouter que je possède déjà les copies des notes des Représentants de la Grande-Bretagne et de la Russie adressées à la Sublime Porte relativement au

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projet de Traité avec la Perse en date du 26 Avril, 1847, et du 26 Février, 1848, insérées dans le deuxième volume des "Actes Internationaux de l'Empire Ottoman" de Gabriel Effendi Noradounghian.

En outre, je désire aussi avoir la copie de l'instruction donnée par l'Ambassade de la Grande-Bretagne au Lieutenant-Colonel Williams, Délégué de la Grande-Bretagne à la Commission Mixte, instruction insérée dans le Livre Bleu *sub* No. 2 en 1865.

Tout en vous remerciant d'avance, veuillez, &c.

(Signé)

Prince MIRZA RIZA KHAN.

[21292]

No. 312

Mr. O'Beirne to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received June 22.)

(No. 270.)

Sir,

St. Petersburg, June 16, 1908.

IN accordance with the instructions contained in your telegram No. 159 of the 12th instant, I called on the following day on the Minister for Foreign Affairs and laid very fully before him your views as to the attitude which should be observed by the Representatives of the two Powers in Persia in the present crisis, reading the greater part of your telegram to him. M. Isvolsky had received a telegram from M. de Hartwig, the substance of which he repeated to me, proposing that the two Representatives should make a communication, in the sense indicated in Mr. Marling's telegram No. 138, to the Persian Ministers, and also to the Medjliss, to the effect that the two Powers were pledged to maintain the existing dynasty. M. de Hartwig represented this as being the only possible means of saving the Shah from deposition, and stated that the present agitation was entirely the work of the Zil-es-Sultan, who was supplying the men and the money for it.

M. Isvolsky was evidently much perplexed. While fully appreciating the force of your arguments against a policy of intervention in the internal affairs of Persia, he was greatly impressed by M. de Hartwig's very positive statement that if things were allowed to go further the only result could be the fall of Mohammed Ali Shah. His Excellency remarked that he had no personal knowledge of Persia, and must accept the opinion of the man on the spot. After some discussion he said that what he most disliked in the situation was the fact that, notwithstanding all that had taken place of late between the two Governments, the old disagreement still subsisted, as he saw, between England and Russia in Persia. We proposed a course of action which would result in putting our protégé, the Zil-es-Sultan, in power, while Russia wished to uphold the present Shah, who was more in the Russian interest. On this point I did my best to disabuse him. I said he might be perfectly certain of one thing, that His Majesty's Government had not the faintest wish to see Mohammed Ali Shah dethroned and the Zil-es-Sultan put in his place. Such a change might conceivably have been of advantage to us before the conclusion of the Convention, but we had nothing to gain by it now. What His Majesty's Government desired was to avoid a step which might commit the two Powers to an eventual intervention by force. I thought at the time that I made some impression upon his Excellency, though he remarked that, whether we wished it or not, the result of the course which we proposed would be to bring the Zil-es-Sultan to power. When I left his Excellency he promised to think the matter over that evening, and at his request I furnished him with the substance of your views in writing.

Since then I have had two further conversations with M. Isvolsky, once having met him by chance, and he explained to me very frankly his views as to the possibility of Zil-es-Sultan's attaining power. He said such an eventuality would be interpreted in Russia as a triumph of British over Russian influence, and that it would submit our understanding to a severe strain ("une rude épreuve"). He also, without as yet giving me a definitive answer to my communication of the 13th instant, indicated that he would be inclined to propose, in lieu of a declaration of the kind suggested by M. de Hartwig, that we should give some sort of a joint warning to Zil-es-Sultan. He pointed out that the two Representatives had already taken this course in December 1907. He argued that it was impossible for the two Powers to fold their arms and let events in Persia take their course. By recognizing the Valiahd as successor to the throne, and by our action in obtaining a pledge of loyalty from the Zil, we had bound ourselves in a sense to the present Shah. I pointed out, of course, that to recognize the Valiahd as heir-apparent was a very different thing from pledging ourselves to keep his father on the throne by force of arms if necessary; and also that

the promise of loyalty obtained from Zil-es-Sultan was merely the condition of the protection accorded him. However, M. Isvolsky maintained that we were under a moral obligation to the present Ruler, which would not allow of our assuming a purely passive attitude in the crisis.

I have, &c.

(Signed)

HUGH O'BEIRNE.

[21293]

No. 313.

Mr. O'Beirne to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received June 22.)

(No. 271.)

Sir,

St. Petersburg, June 17, 1908.

WITH reference to my immediately preceding despatch of yesterday's date, I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your telegram No. 161 of the 15th instant, instructing me to make certain statements to the Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs respecting the attitude of His Majesty's Government towards the pretensions of the Zil-es-Sultan, and the views of His Majesty's Government regarding the course to be followed by the two Powers in Persia.

As I had already had three conversations with M. Isvolsky on Persian affairs since the 13th instant, and had exhaustively discussed the subject with him, I thought it better not to trouble his Excellency with another visit, and I therefore addressed him a letter containing the statement which you desired me to make, and the observations embodied in your telegram.

To-day I saw his Excellency at his weekly reception, and he informed me, as reported in my telegram No. 98, that he had drawn up instructions to M. de Hartwig which he had submitted to the Emperor, as the matter seemed to him of great importance. If His Majesty approved the proposed instructions, they would be communicated to you, with a view to obtaining your concurrence. They were in the sense that a declaration such as suggested by M. de Hartwig could not be made, but that the two Representatives should take a course with regard to the Zil-es-Sultan similar to that which they followed in December 1907.

M. Isvolsky, in the course of conversation, maintained strongly that the two Powers had certain obligations towards the Shah, who was the lawful Ruler, whom they had recognized as such and whose son they had recognized as his successor. Something, his Excellency said, must be done to prevent Mohammed Ali Shah from being dethroned. He went on to say that M. de Hartwig's reports showed that there was a marked difference between the attitude taken by the two Representatives in the present crisis. M. de Hartwig let it be seen that he took an interest in the maintenance of the Shah on the throne; whereas the indifference shown by Mr. Marling to His Majesty's difficulties had the effect of promoting the cause of Zil-es-Sultan. M. Isvolsky appeared quite to endorse the Russian Minister's view, saying that Mr. Marling's attitude could have no other effect. I replied that Mr. Marling's attitude was one of strict neutrality in the conflict between the people and the Shah, and that that was the attitude which His Majesty's Government wished him to observe.

I have, &c.

(Signed)

HUGH O'BEIRNE.

[21586]

No. 314.

Mr. G. Barclay to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received June 22.)

(No. 150.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Constantinople, June 22, 1908.

TURCO-PERSIAN frontier.

Following is repetition of Mr. Wratislaw's telegram No. 40 of the 18th instant, sent via Tabreez and received on the 21st:—

"'Novoe Vremya' correspondent has arrived.

"After careful inquiry, I am convinced that it was chiefly Herkai Kurds of Mergavar who raided Ardishai, &c., assisted by less numerous Mamash Kurds and others who have lately lived in Baranduz.

"The village on the lake which was raided the day before yesterday is the port of Urumia, and the German captain of a small launch fought with the Kurds for some

time. The raiders lifted several hundred sheep, and came mostly from Tergavar. If all this has not actually been instigated by the Turks in order to create an intolerable situation, it is difficult to believe that they do not connive at it.

[21589]

No. 315.

Mr. O'Beirne to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received June 22.)

(No. 99.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

St. Petersburg, June 22, 1908.

M. ISVOLSKY quite agrees with substance of your telegram No. 172 of the 20th instant, which I communicated to him yesterday, and instructions such as you propose have already been telegraphed to Russian Minister at Tehran. His Excellency also promised to consider the suggestion contained in Mr. Marling's telegram No. 148 of the 21st instant, of which I informed him to-day, adding that I had as yet no instructions from you on the subject.

[21590]

No. 316.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received June 22.)

(No. 149.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Tehran, June 22, 1908.

POLITICAL situation.

My telegram No. 148 of yesterday's date

Yesterday the Shah received in audience the Russian Minister, who had an Imperial letter to present containing the announcement of a wedding in the Russian Royal family. The Russian Minister in subsequent conversation advised the Shah to adopt a conciliatory attitude, and in reply His Majesty reiterated that he entertained no hostile feeling towards the Parliament. His Majesty stated that he only desired security for himself against the attacks of the press and the threats of the Enjumens, which were instigated by the Zil-es-Sultan. His Majesty added that he had conclusive proof of the latter's intrigues to dethrone him.

M. de Hartwig professes to think that a joint warning to the Zil without corresponding declaration to the Shah, of which I informed him in general terms, will be agreed to by His Majesty's Government.

It seems probable that a reactionary Ministry will be appointed. There is great discouragement among the popular party, who will probably accept any terms which the Shah offers.

[21588]

No. 317.

Sir Edward Grey to Mr. G. Barclay.

(No. 102.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Foreign Office, June 22, 1908.

FRONTIER dispute between Persia and Turkey.

The Russian Ambassador has communicated to me information which has been received by his Government that alarming proportions have been assumed by the incursions into Persian territory made by the Kurds, by whom one Christian church and eight villages have been burnt within the period of a single week. Complicity in the excesses committed by the Kurds is denied by the Turkish authorities, who, however, have ample force available on the spot for the suppression of disorders.

Meantime, Turkish troops are advancing into the heart of Persian territory.

The Russian Representative at Constantinople has been instructed to make serious representations to the Ottoman Government against the advance into Persian territory made by Turkish troops, and against the excesses which the Kurds have committed. He is to add that his Government trust that categorical instructions to put an end to this situation will be sent immediately to the local authorities by the Sublime Porte, who cannot fail to recognize the justice of these complaints.

You should lend your energetic support to the representations which your Russian colleague has been instructed to make to the Turkish Government.

[21279]

No. 318.

Sir Edward Grey to Mr. O'Beirne.

(No. 175.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Foreign Office, June 22, 1908.

PERSIA.

The best means of supporting the Shah would be that the dispute in the Turco-Persian frontier should be settled through the Embassies of the two Powers in Constantinople acting in concert. Instructions are being sent to His Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires at Constantinople to co-operate in these lines with his Russian colleague.

I concur in the views expressed in Mr. Marling's telegram No. 148 of the 21st instant.

[21814]

No. 319.

Sir Edward Grey to Mr. O'Beirne.

(No. 174.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, June 22, 1908.

COUNT BENCKENDORFF communicated to me to-day a telegram from M. Isvolsky containing alarming information about the Turkish proceedings across the Persian frontier.

I told him that I had already received similar information from our own sources, and had in consequence telegraphed last week to Mr. O'Beirne to explain frankly our attitude to M. Isvolsky.

The disturbances on the Turco-Persian frontier were in a locality in which Russia was more interested than we were. British interests were not directly affected, for the places where we had Oil Concessions were further south, and were not at present involved. The locality was also out of our reach. Further, if we took the initiative in moving our fleet, the impression would be given that war between us and Turkey generally was impending, which would not be confined to the Persian frontier; this might give rise to trouble and excitement in Egypt and elsewhere.

We could not therefore take the initiative.

But, on the other hand, we would cordially support an initiative taken by Russia. Some years ago, before the Anglo-Russian Convention, if Russia had taken steps against Turkey in order to protect the Persian frontier, this would have been regarded by a section of the press here as a pretext for interference by Russia in Persian affairs, and the attitude of the British Government would have been one of watchful suspicion. But matters were quite different now, and I felt very strongly the importance of not leaving Persia under the impression that she would receive no protection against flagrant and unprovoked violations of her territory.

Count Benckendorff told me he heard that the Turkish troops were inclined to move northwards, and this he thought a serious sign.

I communicated to him the substance of a telegram which I proposed sending to Mr. Barclay, instructing him to support energetically the representations which the Russian Chargé d'Affaires had been instructed to make at Constantinople, and Count Benckendorff expressed himself as quite satisfied.

I am, &c.
(Signed) E. GREY.

[21815]

No. 320.

Sir Edward Grey to Mr. O'Beirne.

(No. 175.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, June 22, 1908.

I TOLD Count Benckendorff to-day that I had telegraphed to you to tell M. Isvolsky that, if he thought some action necessary at Tehran, we would be prepared to join in the warning to the Zil.

But I explained to Count Benckendorff that, just as M. Isvolsky feared that to abstain from any action at all might be construed as supporting the Zil, so I feared that the warning to the Zil—unless it was accompanied by a warning to the Shah not to upset the Constitution, or at any rate that he could not depend upon our support to

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save him from the consequences of quarrelling with the Constitutional party—might be construed as siding against the Constitutional party.

Count Benckendorff doubted whether there was any very clear division between parties in such a country as Persia.

I said there might very speedily come into existence a division between pro-foreign and anti-foreign parties in Persia, in which the pro-foreign were sure to be a small minority. A Government depending on foreign support would become as futile in Persia and as embarrassing to its foreign supporters as that of Abdul Aziz in Morocco.

Count Benckendorff observed that we had already pledged ourselves to the recognition of the Shah's son as his successor, and he asked whether he could not communicate some comment of mine on this point to M. Isvolsky.

I told him I would rather not say anything further to M. Isvolsky before receiving his reply to the proposal which I had made on Saturday. But I did not at all wish to throw over our declaration in favour of the Shah's son. On the contrary, in the event of the assassination or deposition of the Shah, I thought it would be very useful to us to appeal to that declaration in order to gain time if the Zil or any one else seized the throne. We might even perhaps tell the Zil that, in the event of his displacing the Shah, our declaration about the son would stand in the way of our recognizing the Zil.

I would, however, wait till I heard from M. Isvolsky.

Of course, if the Persians definitely set aside the Shah's son and rallied to some one else we might have to recognize facts as they were, but in a sudden emergency we could use our declaration in favour of the Shah's son to avoid being hurried prematurely into the recognition of any one else.

I am, &c.
(Signed) E. GREY.

[19682]

No. 321.

Sir Edward Grey to Mr. Marling.

(No. 102.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, June 22, 1908.

I HAVE received your despatch No. 116 of the 20th ultimo relative to the claim of Messrs. Lynch against the Persian Government for reimbursement of the deficit on the running expenses of the steam-ship "Shushan," and I approve the language held by you in the notes which you have addressed to the Persian Minister for Foreign Affairs on the subject.

It is clear from the terms of the Mushir-ed-Dowleh's communication, copy of which is inclosed in your despatch under reply, that it would be of no use to press the Persian Government further on this subject now, nor do the circumstances of the case appear to warrant His Majesty's Government in doing so very strongly.

It is therefore unnecessary for you to take any further steps in the matter for the present.

I am, &c.
(Signed) E. GREY.

[19689]

No. 322.

Sir Edward Grey to Mr. Marling.

(No. 103. Confidential.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, June 22, 1908.

I HAVE received your despatch No. 123, Confidential, of the 21st ultimo, reporting the conclusion of a formal alliance between the Sheikh of Mohammerah and the Bakhtiari Khans, and I concur in the opinion expressed by you that this arrangement should be viewed with favour by His Majesty's Government.

I have to request you to inform His Majesty's Vice-Consul at Mohammerah that I approve the language held by him on this subject to the Bakhtiari Khans and to Hajji Rais-et-Tujjar.

I am, &c.
(Signed) E. GREY.

[20033]

No. 323.

Sir Edward Grey to Mr. Marling.

(No. 104.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, June 22, 1908.

THE Persian Chargé d'Affaires called at this Office on the 5th instant and was received by Mr. Mallet.

He stated that the discussion on the subject of the demands put forward by the Russian Government in connection with the dispute on the frontier was still proceeding. The Persian Government had given way on some points, and had asked that a joint Commission might be appointed to settle the others.

Mehdi Khan asked whether the question could not be discussed at Reval.

With regard to the Turco-Persian frontier dispute, no progress was being made, and he inquired whether the King might not suggest to the Emperor of Russia that joint representations should be made to the Sublime Porte on the subject.

Mr. Mallet informed Mehdi Khan that I was absent and that it was too late to instruct Sir C. Hardinge to raise these questions during the visit of the King to Reval. It was possible that he might discuss them informally, but, with regard to the latter of them, we had not heard that the Commission had failed, and until that happened it did not appear that there would be any use in taking the action which Mehdi Khan proposed. When the Commission definitely failed, a new situation would arise.

I am, &c.
(Signed) E. GREY.

[21618]

No. 324.

Mr. G. Barclay to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received June 23.)

(No. 151.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Constantinople, June 23, 1908.

I HAVE received the following telegram, No. 39, dated the 17th instant, and received to-day, from Mr. Wratishaw at Urumia:—

"The Kurds continue their depredations in different directions as far as the lake due east of Urumia, and the panic in the neighbourhood continues unabated.

"The Turks have proposed to send a mixed flying column through the southern district, and the Persian Commissioner tells me that he is prepared to accept this suggestion; but I am afraid that it is not likely to lead to anything.

"Without consulting the Russian Vice-Consul or myself, the Persian Commissioner has written to Tahir Pasha, asking him to state the Turkish claims and to furnish proofs of their validity, but he has merely received an evasive answer on the same lines as before. We are urging him to make a detailed proposal on the lines of the instructions which he has received, but he hesitates to do so, fearing apparently to give his case away."

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No. 325.

Mr. G. Barclay to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received June 23.)

(No. 152.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Constantinople, June 23, 1908.

ACTING on instructions which he had received from his Government, the Russian Chargé d'Affaires made energetic representations at the Porte to-day, urging the necessity of steps being taken for restraining the Kurds, and of the withdrawal of the Turkish troops to within the disputed frontier zone. I thought it well to support his representations on the lines indicated in your telegram No. 161 of the 17th instant to St. Petersburg.

The Grand Vizier promised that orders should at once be sent for the withdrawal of any troops that might have advanced beyond the zone, and that everything possible should be done to stop the depredations of the Kurds, but he added that the Kurds responsible were not under Turkish authority, and that Tahir Pasha denied that any Turkish troops had advanced into Persian territory.

[21677]

No. 326.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received June 23.)

(No. 150.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Tehran, June 23, 1908.

SITUATION in Tehran.

About 6 o'clock this morning twenty Cossacks were sent by the Shah to arrest eight persons who were in the mosque adjoining the Assembly House. The demand for the surrender of these persons met with a refusal, and a shot was fired from the mosque. Fighting then started, and is still continuing. The number of people killed is said to be large. Guns are being used by the Shah's troops.

[21708]

No. 327.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received June 23.)

(No. 151.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Tehran, June 23, 1908.

SITUATION in Tehran.

My immediately preceding telegram of to-day.

The Assembly buildings and the mosque have been cleared by the Shah's forces, and the meeting-place of the Azerbaijan Enjumen has been destroyed. The Shah has arrested the Chief Mujtehid, Seyyid Abdullah, the Sheikh-ul-Reis, and some ten other alleged leaders of popular party. The Cossack brigade, which has lost forty men, has played the chief part, with its guns under Russian officers. The loss on the other side is said to be very small, but the exact number is unknown. A state of siege has been proclaimed and the Enjuments have dispersed.

Some shops and houses, including that of the Zil-es-Sultan, and the Assembly building, have been pillaged.

M. de Hartwig and I have sent our dragomans to the Shah, with the request that the most stringent measures may be taken to maintain order and protect Europeans.

We have also instructed them to recall to the Shah's memory the assurances which His Majesty gave us in December 1907, and to suggest that a Proclamation declaring that he has no desire to abolish the Constitution should be issued by His Majesty.

I have instructed Military Attaché, who will stay in Tehran to-night, to prevent if possible people from taking bast in His Majesty's Legation. Major Stokes reports that there is as yet no sign of this, and that town is now quiet.

[21589]

No. 328.

Sir Edward Grey to Mr. O'Beirne.

(No. 177.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Foreign Office, June 23, 1908.

JOINT representations.

I request that you will inform Minister for Foreign Affairs that I concur in the opinion expressed by Mr. Marling that we should make known authoritatively the substance of both communications by similar means to those adopted last Christmas. You should ask for his assent, so that instructions as suggested may be sent to our respective Representatives as soon as possible.

Express satisfaction that his Excellency has agreed to my proposal.

[21598]

No. 329.

Sir Edward Grey to Mr. Marling.

(No. 121.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Foreign Office, June 23, 1908.

JOINT representations.

With reference to Mr. O'Beirne's telegram No. 99 of the 22nd instant, and my telegram to Mr. O'Beirne No. 172 of the 20th instant.

I request that you will act in concert with M. de Hartwig, in accordance with the latter telegram referred to.

[21783]

No. 330.

India Office to Foreign Office.—(Received June 24.)

THE Under-Secretary of State for India presents his compliments to the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and, by direction of Viscount Morley, forwards herewith, for the information of the Secretary of State, copy of inclosures in a letter from the Foreign Secretary to the Government of India, dated the 14th May, relative to a proposal to abolish the Government coal depôt at Bushire and to create one at Koweit.

Copies have been sent to the Admiralty.

India Office, June 23, 1908.

Inclosure 1 in No. 330.

*Major Cox to Government of India.**Bushire, May 5, 1907.*

I HAVE the honour to make a reference on the subject of the arrangements now existing for the coaling of the ships of His Majesty's navy and the Royal Indian Marine in these waters west of Karachi, and especially at Bushire.

2. The Government of India are no doubt aware that coal is obtainable at—

(a.) Muscat—Government depôt.

(b.) Bushire—Government depôt.

(c.) Bussorah—depôt of private British firm.

As regards Muscat, I have no special observations to make. It is necessary and important for us to have a coaling station there, and the facilities obtainable, subject to the limited resources of the port in regard to coolies and lighters, are considerable.

3. Near the entrance to the Persian Gulf we have no coal, Basidu having fallen into desuetude as a coaling depôt for some twenty years past. It would no doubt prove very convenient to His Majesty's ships, which are, I believe, under standing orders to call there on their way up and down the Gulf, if we had a store at Henjam, but until the nature of our occupation is finally decided it would be impolitic to take any action in regard to that island which might possibly introduce a fresh element of difficulty in our negotiations with the Persian Government.

4. I now come to the case of Bushire. This depôt is, like that at Muscat, maintained by the Marine Department of the Government of India.

The coal hangars are rented and the handing of the coal is done under a contract arrangement with a local trader. The actual coal work is carried on under circumstances of great difficulty. The harbour is very treacherous for many months of the year for native boats, and, except in the latter part of the hot weather, perhaps from July to November, wind is apt to get up very quickly and it is impossible to rely on the calmness of the sea for two days together.

Moreover, only the smaller ships can venture into the inner anchorage $3\frac{1}{2}$ miles from the shore. The larger vessels, such as His Majesty's ships "Hyacinth," "Proserpine," "Fox," cannot enter, and when they are driven to take coal have to do so from the outer anchorage 7 or 8 miles away.

Another difficulty is that we have no direct control over coolies, boats, or boatmen, and, owing to the vagaries of one and all and the difficulty of coaling ships at such long distances from the shore, the process is a most trying one both to those concerned with the ships at sea and with the coal on shore. The natural consequence is that vessels as a rule avoid coaling at Bushire, and the depôt is chiefly used for the requirements of the R.I.M.S. "Lawrence" and of the subsidized ships occasionally.

5. Now the "Lawrence" and His Majesty's three subsidized ships, "Sphinx," "Lapwing," and "Redbreast," can all coal without inconvenience and with much greater practical facility at Bussorah, where a store of coal is kept for sale to any vessel that may require it by a local British merchant.

It would seem, therefore, that if we only had to consider smaller ships in this part of the Gulf their needs could be supplied entirely by the Bussorah contractor,

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but in the absence of coal at Henjam it is no doubt necessary that we should have some coal in the north of the Gulf available in case of urgency for ships of any ordinary draught.

I have the honour in this connection to ask that the Government of India will be pleased to consider, in consultation with the naval authorities, whether the coaling station at Bushire could not conveniently and usefully be dispensed with and replaced by one at Koweit, where the harbour is much more sheltered and convenient for large vessels and where the more frequent appearance of our ships which would result would have a useful effect in other ways.

I would mention that, even if the Government depôt at Bushire were done away with, there would almost invariably, as now, be a store of coal in the godowns of one of the British shipping agents as at Bussorah, and as far as the "Lawrence" is concerned it would be no more trouble for her to go to Koweit or Bussorah for coal than to go for water to the Shatt-el-Arab, which she has to do regularly in any case.

Should it be considered necessary to maintain any fixed arrangement at Bushire, it might be held sufficient to enter into a contract with some local merchant in which he would undertake to have not less than 500 tons always available and to sell it to us at a fixed rate.

6. I recognize that this is a question which primarily concerns the naval authorities, but as a depôt at Koweit seems politically and practically to have a good many advantages over one at Bushire I have ventured to solicit consideration of it at this stage, as it may be held to affect the question, now before the Government, of the acquisition of part of Bunder Shweikh.

Inclosure 2 in No. 330.

Government of India to Commodore Sir G. Warrender.

(Confidential.)

Simla, July 15, 1907.

I AM directed to say that the Government of India have under consideration the desirability of the abolition of the coal depôt at Bushire and the establishment of one at Koweit.

The coal depôt at Bushire is maintained by this Department, but it has been represented that the actual coaling work, which is done under a contract arrangement with a local trader, is carried on under circumstances of great difficulty and that the harbour itself has many disadvantages. At Koweit the harbour is much more sheltered and convenient for large vessels and the local Political Officer represents that the more frequent appearance of our ships there would have a useful effect in other ways.

2. I am to request that your Excellency will be so good as to favour the Government of India by wire with your opinion on the proposal.

Inclosure 3 in No. 330.

Commodore Sir G. Warrender to Government of India.

Diyatalawa, July 21, 1907.

I HAVE the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your Confidential letter dated the 15th July, 1907, re stores and coal, a reply to which will be sent by wire as soon as possible.

Inclosure 4 in No. 330.

Commodore Sir G. Warrender to Government of India.

(Telegraphic.)

Colombo, August 3, 1907.

I HAVE no objection to the proposed transfer of coaling station referred to in your letter of the 15th ultimo.

Inclosure 5 in No. 330.

Government of India to Director of Royal Indian Marine.

(Confidential.)
(Telegraphic.)

August 26, 1907.

PLEASE wire, in consultation with Examiner, if necessary, cost necessitated if transfer of coal depôt, referred to in your unofficial communication of the 22nd July, is carried out.

Inclosure 6 in No. 330.

Director of Royal Indian Marine to Government of India.

(Telegraphic.)

Bombay, September 5, 1907.

YOUR telegram dated the 26th August.

After consulting Examiner, Marine Accounts, can give no idea of cost of building at Koweit; suggest referring to Political Resident.

Inclosure 7 in No. 330.

Government of India to Director of Royal Indian Marine.

(Telegraphic.)

September 19, 1907.

REFERENCE correspondence ending with your telegram of the 5th instant.

Please wire, after consultation with Examiner, if necessary, cost of establishment and maintenance of Bushire coal depôt.

Inclosure 8 in No. 330.

Director of Royal Indian Marine to Government of India.

(Telegraphic.)

Bombay, September 21, 1907.

YOUR telegram of the 19th September.

Annual cost Bushire depôt establishment 670 rupees, other fluctuating charges annual average landing coal, 3,370 rupees, godown rent 1,000 rupees, and miscellaneous 90 rupees; total, 5,130 rupees.

Inclosure 9 in No. 330.

Government of India to Major Cox.

(Telegraphic.)

Simla, September 26, 1907.

COALING arrangements. Your letter dated the 5th May.

Please state initial and recurring expenditure on Bushire coaling station, and also, if station were transferred to Koweit, would Bunder Shweikh foreshore be suitable for station?

Inclosure 10 in No. 330.

Major Cox to Government of India.

(Telegraphic.)

Shiraz, September 28, 1907.

PLEASE see your telegram dated the 26th September.

The foreshore in question seems to me to be eminently suited for the location of a coaling station, but I would recommend that you should invite the Commodore's opinion. I will answer the financial query later on.

Inclosure 11 in No. 330.

Government of India to Commodore Sir G. Warrender.

(Confidential.)

Simla, October 15, 1907.

WITH reference to the correspondence ending with your telegram dated the 3rd August, 1907, regarding the abolition of the coal depôt at Bushire and the establishment of one at Koweit, I am directed to forward the accompanying copies of telegrams,* and to request that your Excellency will be so good as to favour the Government of India with your views on the suitability of the Bunder Shweikh foreshore for the location of the coaling station.

2. I am also to inclose copies of correspondence in connection with the acquisition of the foreshore.†

Inclosure 12 in No. 330.

Commodore Sir G. Warrender to Government of India.

(Confidential.)

Colombo, October 23, 1907.

IN reply to your Confidential letter of the 15th instant, be pleased to acquaint his Excellency the Viceroy and Governor-General in Council that I consider the Bunder Shweikh foreshore at Koweit is suitable for the proposed coal depôt at that port.

2. The inclosures to your letter under reply are returned herewith as requested.

Inclosure 13 in No. 330.

Major Cox to Government of India.

(Confidential.)

Bushire, March 22, 1908.

WITH reference to Foreign Department telegram, dated the 26th September, 1907, regarding the proposed establishment of a coal depôt at Koweit, I have the honour to forward a copy of correspondence which has passed between this office and the Political Agent, Koweit, on the subject.

2. Major Knox estimates the cost of building three godowns to hold 3,600 tons of coal besides allowing air space and room to work in, at 35,000 rupees, but he thinks that by a careful manipulation of the exchange between dollar and rupee, and by importing for that purpose dollars from Bombay, much economy might be effected. I have no comments to offer on the estimates, which have been framed with the local knowledge of the rates of labour and prices of materials, and I think that they may be accepted unless the Government of India decide to have them prepared by the Assistant Engineer, Persian Gulf sub-division.

3. Next comes the question of coaling charges. These Major Knox puts down as follows in a subsequent communication:—

- (a.) For ships coaling off Bunder Shweikh at 15 annas per ton.
- (b.) For ships coaling in usual anchorage at 1 r. 14 a. per ton.

These rates include weighing and bagging (cost of bags inclusive), putting into boats, boat-hire, and stacking into bunkers on board the ship; they do not, however, seem to take into account the wear and tear of the bags and the cost of mending and replacing those that have become unserviceable. I think, therefore, that 1 r. 8 a. and 2 rupees per ton would be about the correct rates for coaling in Bunder Shweikh and in the present anchorage, respectively. In Bushire we pay 2 rupees per ton when coaling in the inner harbour and 2 r. 4 a. per ton in the outer anchorage.

4. Then comes the question of establishment charges. Major Knox proposes

* Telegram from Government of India to Major Cox, dated September 26, 1907; telegram from Major Cox to Government of India, dated September 28, 1907.

† Letter from Major Cox to Government of India, dated February 10, 1907, and inclosures; telegram from Secretary of State for India, dated June 26, 1907; telegram from Government of India to Major Cox, dated July 8, 1907; telegram to Secretary of State for India, dated July 7, 1907; telegram from Secretary of State for India, dated July 23, 1907; telegram from Government of India to Major Cox, dated July 30, 1907; telegram from Major Cox to Government of India, dated July 9, 1907.

two watchmen as permanent establishment, and thinks that the duties of tindal and weighman can best be intrusted to the Indian crew of the Political Agent's launch. I do not, however, consider that it would be feasible to utilize their services in coaling matters. I doubt whether the crew would be always available for coaling work, as they will have their own work in the launch to attend to, and it may not unfrequently happen that the launch is away when a ship has to be coaled.

I think, therefore, that the coal depôt should have its own separate permanent establishment, consisting of a tindal and two weighmen. These men should be located at the depôt and act as watchmen as well. The rate of pay which may have to be allowed to secure good men may be roughly estimated as follows:—

One tindal at 35 rupees per mensem.

Two watchmen at 25 rupees each per mensem.

The total cost of establishing a coal depôt at Koweit would thus be:—

	Rupees.
Initial charges	35,000.
Recurring charges—	
Wages	1,020 per annum.
Petty repairs, &c. (say)	80 "
Total	1,100 "

The cost of the present Bushire depôt is as follows:—

	Rupees.
Rent of godowns—	
Two at 80 rupees per mensem	960 per annum.
Five, at 220 krans per mensem	812 "
Wages—	
One tindal at 20 rupees per mensem	} = 44 rs. 528 "
Two weighmen, at 12 rupees each per mensem	
Total	2,300 "

By the transfer of the depôt to Koweit a saving of 1,200 rupees per annum would be effected in recurring expenditure, and we should be left with the initial cost estimated for managing the depôt, namely, 35,000 rupees.

5. With regard to the construction of a jetty and a light tramway which have been suggested by Major Knox, I fully concur with him that if these projects were carried out the coaling arrangements in Koweit would be placed on a very satisfactory footing, which would no doubt be welcomed by the Navy.

The expediency or otherwise of incurring this expenditure now seems to depend upon the question of the degree of importance with which Koweit is likely to be invested in the near future. This question will no doubt receive due consideration at the hands of Government.

Inclosure 14 in No. 330.

*Captain Trevor (for Major Cox) to Major Knox.**Bushire, January 7, 1908.*

I HAVE the honour to inform you that the Government of India have under consideration the question of abolishing the Government coal depôt at Bushire (where, as you are aware, the conditions for coaling ships are extremely inconvenient) and of creating one at Koweit instead.

I am desired to report the initial and recurring expenditure in connection with the depôt at Bushire, and to give similar estimates of probable initial and recurring cost in case of Koweit.

I attach a Memorandum giving details regarding the Bushire depôt, and request that you will put me in possession as far as possible of similar information and estimates for Koweit.

Inclosure 15 in No. 330.

Memorandum respecting Bushire Coal Depot.

1. ON an average 3,000 tons are required per annum, but the quantity demanded annually is regulated on the basis of the average consumption of the three previous years, and the result arrived at is multiplied by $2\frac{1}{2}$ so as to complete the supply for $2\frac{1}{2}$ years, which we are supposed to keep in stock.

2. We have the following buildings for storing coal in Bushire, viz. (a) a caravanserai containing three godowns of the dimensions given in the margin;* (b) one godown large and three godowns small, dimensions as per margin.† No ventilators are required if properly covered coal-sheds are built after the fashion of the godowns at present in our occupation here. I am trying to have a sketch of them taken for the information of Major Knox.

3. Our coal establishment here, which was only sanctioned in July 1906, consists as follows:—

One tindal on 20 rupees = 75 krans.

Two weighmen on 12 rupees = 45 krans each, and I think the same strength will have to be engaged at Koweit.

I would, however, observe that if a trustworthy man as a contractor for shipping and landing coal could be found in Koweit, who could also be intrusted with the custody of the coal under the supervision of the Political Agent's Office, there would be no need for a coal establishment. Of course the contractor will require liberal treatment in the matter of rates for shipping and landing coal. Here we pay 2 rupees per ton for shipping coal in the inner anchorage and 2.4 rupees per ton in the outer anchorage. The charges for shipping include labour for weighing and bagging the coal, putting it into lighters, conveying to the ship to be coaled, and putting and storing it on board. The charges also include the cost of gunny bags. The charges for landing include lighterage from the ship to shore and stacking the coal in the godowns. The Contractor here is supposed to have about 200 tons bagged and ready for immediate shipment. A regular contract will have to be drawn more or less on the lines indicated here.

Inclosure 16 in No. 330.

Major Knox to Major Cox.

(Confidential.)

Koweit, January 22, 1908.

I HAVE the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your Confidential letter dated the 7th January, 1908, and, in reply, to forward a Memorandum, in which I have done my best to estimate the probable initial and recurring cost of establishing the Government coal depot at Koweit.

Inclosure 17 in No. 330.

Note on probable Initial and Recurring Cost of Establishing the Government Coal Depot at Koweit.

Cost of Masonry Godowns.

Inner measurement	48 x 80 x 15 feet.	Cubic feet.
Two foundation walls, 52 x 3 x 7 x 2 feet	2,184
Two walls, 52 x 2 x 15 x 2 feet	3,120
Two foundation walls, 80 x 3 x 7 x 2 feet	3,360
Two walls, 80 x 3 x 15 x 2 feet	4,800
Plinth flooring, 80 x 48 x 1 feet	3,840
Twelve pillars, 3 x 3 x 15 feet	1,620
Twelve foundation pillars, 4 x 4 x 7 feet	1,344
Total stone work	20,268

N.B.—Foundations only 6 feet below soil. Extra foot required for plinth.

* Two godowns of uniform dimensions: length, 58 feet; breadth, 50 feet; height, 16 feet. One godown: length, 22 feet; breadth, 11 feet; height, 16 feet. Monthly rent, 80 rupees.

† One godown: length, 60 feet; breadth, 40 feet; height, 15 feet. Monthly rent, 100 krans. Three godowns of uniform dimensions: length, 26 feet; breadth, 27 feet; height, 15 feet. Monthly rent, 120 krans.

	Rupees.
Say, 20,000 cubic feet of stone = 100 boom-loads, at 13 dollars per boom-load plus portage = 1,300 dollars, equivalent, at 180 per cent., to ..	2,340
Juss, labour, and water at twice the above figure (say)	5,000

It is a question whether one of cement to three of sand would not be more satisfactory with sea-water handy, and it appears essential for foundations. The resulting damp should not injure the coal.

Fifteen beams, each 16 feet long, 240-foot run, at 2 dollars per foot = 480 dollars, equivalent, at 180 per cent., to	864
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Qy. Whether steel beams or old rails doubled could not be used: more economical and stronger.

Eighteen score chandals or boritees, 14 feet long, at 35 dollars per score, plus portage	1,134
Warehouse doors and windows	300
Roofing, mud, labour, baschils, and bawaris	500
Excavation for foundations	500
Ten per cent. for contingencies	1,233
Total cost	11,701

Three godowns of the above type would cost 35,000 rupees approximately. They would represent 172,800 cubic feet, which should accommodate, at 48 cubic feet per ton, 3,600 tons. Allowing for air space and rooms to work in, this does not seem excessive.

The estimates are pitched rather high on purpose. Much economy might be effected by the careful management of the dollar. A chest of 10,000 dollars might be brought from Bombay. It will be noticed that twenty-one years' rental at Bushire rates would pay for the initial cost, and repairs of a substantial structure like the above should be trifling.

The duties of tindal and weighmen could best be intrusted to the Indian crew of the Political Agent's launch, and their labour paid for by the job at 4 annas per ton.

A couple of local watchmen would be required, and it would be necessary to pay them at high rates of pay living at that distance from the town; 25 rupees per mensem would suffice per man, but they would have to be supplied with water, which would cost: initial storage tanks, 60 rupees = recurring monthly, 15 rupees. The recurring expenditure would have to be doubled probably for the Indian crew of steam-launch.

As regards loading the coal, the most simple, though certainly costly, arrangement would be a jetty—extreme length 200 yards—which would bring one into 20 feet of water at lowest tides, and alongside which most ships likely to want coal here for some time could lie. The cost of this is a matter for experts.

Expert knowledge would also be able to say whether a light tramway—say 250 yards long straight from the coal-sheds to the sea, along which truck-loads could be shoved right up to the ship's side—would not reduce the time and labour of loading and unloading to a minimum. The jetty would, of course, be useful for many other purposes.

Coolies are procurable, but would require a high wage, probably 2 dollars per day per head. Steamer wants 200 tons estimated cost of coolie labour. Required: gang of sixty men, working one whole working day at 2 dollars per head, 120 dollars = 204 rupees.

With the trucks and tramway forty men would suffice and do the job quicker.

We must add cost of bagging coal. But the whole thing should be done within 1 r. 8 a. per ton, exclusive of cost of building jetty, tramway, godowns, provision of trucks, and repairs to above plus cost of permanent establishment.

(Signed) S. G. KNOX, Major,
Political Agent, Koweit.

[21822]

No. 331.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received June 24.)

(No. 152.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Tehran, June 24, 1908.

SITUATION. My telegram No. 151 of the 23rd instant.

In reply to our message, profuse assurances were given by the Shah and special orders were issued for the protection of the telegraphs and the Imperial Bank of Persia.

Late last night Taghi Zadeh, another Deputy, and five journalists who were in fear of their lives took bast in the Legation in town.

About thirty prominent members of Popular party, mostly members of Enjumens, and journalists, have been arrested by the Shah.

I do not anticipate danger to Europeans, and town remains quiet.

[21845]

No. 332.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received June 24.)

(No. 153.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Tehran, June 24, 1908.

THE Italian Minister has been applied to for protection by the Minister of Finance.

In spite of the efforts of the Military Attaché to prevent it, the number of refugees in His Majesty's Legation is increasing.

[21618]

No. 333.

Sir Edward Grey to Mr. Marling.

(No. 123.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Foreign Office, June 24, 1908.

WITH reference to Mr. Wratislaw's telegram No. 39 respecting the frontier dispute between Persia and Turkey.

It is very desirable that the Persian Commissioner should put his proposal forward. You should urge this on the Persian Government.

[21010]

No. 334.

Foreign Office to India Office.

Sir,

Foreign Office, June 24, 1908.

WITH reference to your letter of the 1st ultimo relative to the proposal of Messrs. Ellinger and Co. for the formation of a Company to work the Concession held by the Muin-et-Tujjar for the extraction of red oxide on the Island of Hormuz, I am directed by Secretary Sir Edward Grey to transmit to you herewith copy of a letter from that firm stating that they contemplate ceasing to work the business through Messrs. Frank C. Strick and Co. (Limited), and either placing the contract in the hands of Messrs. Andrew Weir and Co. or undertaking to sell themselves on behalf of the Muin.[®]

Messrs. Ellinger express the hope that this change in their plans will not interfere with the support promised to their enterprise by His Majesty's Government.

I am to inform you that it appears to Sir E. Grey that, so long as this enterprise remains in British hands, the question of what firm or Company is selected by Messrs. Ellinger to work the Concession is immaterial, and he would accordingly propose, subject to the concurrence of Viscount Morley, to return to the firm's letter a reply in this sense, and to convey to them an assurance of the continued support of His Majesty's Government through His Majesty's Legation at Tehran.

I am, &c.

(Signed) LOUIS MALLET.

[21937]

No. 335.

India Office to Foreign Office.—(Received June 25.)

Sir,

India Office, June 24, 1908.

I AM directed to acknowledge your letter of the 12th instant, asking for the views of the Secretary of State for India on the suggestion made by His Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires at Tehran in his telegram No. 135 of the 5th instant, that the British firm, referred to in your letter of the 21st April, who have applied to the Persian Government for a Concession to work oxide on Sirri Island, should now obtain through the British authorities a Concession from the Sheikh of Shargah.

In reply, I am to say that it appears to Viscount Morley that His Majesty's Government are precluded from acting on this suggestion by the statement in the note to the Persian Government, inclosed with Sir A. Hardinge's despatch No. 104 of the 15th June, 1904, that "we have not insisted on the Persian Government removing its flag from the Island of Sirri till the controversy between the two Governments as to the ownership of the island, which originated many years ago, has been reciprocally settled." This statement, on the other hand, would justify His Majesty's Government in prohibiting the grant of the Concession, without their consent, by the Persian Government, to any of the other applicants referred to in Mr. Marling's telegram.

In these circumstances, it appears best to Lord Morley to adhere to the view expressed, after consultation with the Government of India, in my letter of the 2nd instant, that no protest need be made against the grant of the Concession to Messrs. Haji Ali Akbar and Sons, of Manchester, subject to the guarantee named in your letter of the 21st April, viz., that they will control the Concession as a British Company in British interests, and will not transfer it or allow it to be shared in by any foreigner.

Mr. Marling might be instructed to point out to the Persian Government, with reference to Sir A. Hardinge's note mentioned above, that the grant of a Concession, without our consent, would lead to the assertion by His Majesty's Government of the claims of the Jowasmi Chief to the island.

I am, &c.

(Signed) A. GODLEY.

[21936]

No. 336.

India Office to Foreign Office.—(Received June 25.)

Sir,

India Office, June 24, 1908.

I AM directed by Viscount Morley to invite the attention of the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs to the telegram No. 144 of the 17th instant from His Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires at Tehran, reporting a statement by the Russian Consul at Turbat-i-Haidari that his Government have appointed a Colonel on the Staff of the General Officer Commanding in Turkestan to be Military Attaché at Seistan in the place of the dragoman recently deceased.

Such an appointment appears to Lord Morley certain to create a degree of friction detrimental to the policy underlying the recent Agreement concerning Persia, and opposed to its spirit. He would suggest, for Sir E. Grey's consideration, that the Russian Government should be asked not to give effect to the appointment if it is found that they are contemplating it. It will be remembered that Mr. Marling, in his telegram No. 48 of the 19th February last, reported a denial by the Russian Minister of any intention on the part of his Government to increase their Consular staff in Seistan.

Lord Morley recognizes that a representation on the subject to the Russian Government may be followed by a request from them for the withdrawal of the Military Attaché at Meshed. The two appointments are not on the same footing, the British officer at Meshed having been stationed there for some time before the commencement of the negotiations that led to the Agreement. But if the Russian Government press the point, the question should be governed, in Lord Morley's opinion, by the considerations which caused the decision in the matter of the Seistan telegraph line to abandon our claim for the retention of British signallers in the Russian zone, in order to insure the exclusion of Russian signallers from the British zone.

In the event of its being found necessary to withdraw our Military Attaché from Meshed, the obvious course would be to station him in Seistan, whence it would be possible for him to carry on his work, though perhaps not quite so effectively. The

appointment of a Military Attaché at Meshed, if there is not one already at that place, is not a matter that could be questioned by His Majesty's Government.

I am, &c.
(Signed) A. GODLEY.

[21949]

No. 337.

India Office to Foreign Office.—(Received June 25.)

THE Under-Secretary of State for India presents his compliments to the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and, by direction of Viscount Morley, forwards herewith, for the information of the Secretary of State, copy of a telegram to the Viceroy, dated the 23rd instant, relative to the reported appointment of a Russian Military Attaché in Seistan.

India Office, June 25, 1908.

Inclosure in No. 337.

Viscount Morley to Government of India.

(Telegraphic.) P.

India Office, June 23, 1908.

APPOINTMENT of Colonel on the staff of Officer Commanding, Turkestan, as Military Attaché to the Russian Consulate, Seistan, is reported by Russian Consul at Turbat-i-Haidairi. Suggestion has been made to the Foreign Office that they should request Russian Government that, as appointment would be inconsistent with policy underlying recent Agreement, they should not give effect to it if they have it in contemplation. It would, however, be difficult to resist demand for withdrawal of our officer from Meshed, to which such a request may of course lead. Suggestion has been made that our Attaché at Meshed might carry on his work, though not so effectively as at present, from Seistan, and that, if necessary, he should be withdrawn to that place. I shall be glad to have your views as soon as possible by telegraph.

[21958]

No. 338.

Mr. O'Beirne to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received June 25.)

(No. 102.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

St. Petersburg, June 25, 1908.

MINISTER for Foreign Affairs complained to me to-day, though in the most friendly manner possible, of the fact that, as reported by M. de Hartwig, a "crowd" of refugees have taken bast at the British Legation. His Excellency considers that a very unfortunate impression will be produced by this circumstance. In reply, I informed his Excellency that His Majesty's Representative at Tehran had reported that some refugees had entered Legation, in spite of Military Attaché having remained there with special instructions to prevent bast being taken. The strictest instructions against allowing this practice had been sent to His Majesty's Legation, but I believed it was sometimes practically impossible to prevent its being resorted to. I added that I knew that those who had taken refuge in the Legation would as soon as possible be induced to leave.

[21952]

No. 339.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received June 25.)

(No. 154.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Tehran, June 25, 1908.

FIGHTING in Tehran. My immediately preceding telegram.

The first shot was undoubtedly fired by the people in the mosque and Assembly, among whom some Deputies were included. According to the Russian account, though losing heavily, the party of Cossacks, under a Russian officer, appears to have shown considerable forbearance pending the receipt of orders from the Shah. I believe, on the other hand, that every preparation had been made to clear the mosque by force if this proved necessary. In any case, the Shah had reasonable ground for taking strong measures, as the attack was made by the popular party on the troops. It is admitted by the Russian officers that throughout the popular party purposely did not fire at them.

There was no disturbance during the night of the 23rd, and the following day some shops were open and the town was orderly. The houses of one or two Notables suspected of being concerned in the agitation against the Shah were however attacked

by the troops by the Shah's orders. An entry was forced by gun-fire, and the troops looted the contents. Four houses have been so treated in the two days, and it is believed that others will be treated in the same way.

Efforts are being made to catch Deputies, and several, including the President of the Assembly, have already been arrested.

The Anjumens seem to be cowed; their supporters are falling away, and the Shah has complete mastery. Yesterday morning two prisoners were strangled at the Shah's camp, and there are about thirty persons, other than Deputies, under arrest. There are now in the Legation fifty refugees.

There has been fighting in Tabreez between the popular party and the Shah's partisans. There is no sign from the other provinces, and the Zil-es-Sultan is trying to dissociate himself from the agitation.

Europeans do not, in my opinion, run any danger.

[21953]

No. 340.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received June 25.)

(No. 155.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Tehran, June 25, 1908.

POLITICAL situation. My telegram No. 154 of to-day.

Yesterday afternoon the Secretary of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs came to see me at the Legation in town, bringing a message from the Shah. His Majesty expressed surprise at hearing that the Legation was encouraging people to take bast, and stated that such a proceeding was in contradiction with our known policy of non-intervention.

I replied that the refugees had come by no act of mine, but very much against my will, and that the reports which had reached His Majesty were quite untrue. I stated that, though I had no wish to intervene, there was a point at which abstention became inhumanity—the two executions at the Shah's camp unhappily proving that the persons who had taken bast in the Legation had reason to fear for their lives. While doing my best to discourage others from taking refuge in the Legation, I would prevent those persons who were already there from participating in the present struggle, but that, without guarantee for a fair trial, I could not surrender those who had sought our protection, except on instructions from my Government. I stated that such a thing would not be tolerated by public opinion in England. I had received His Majesty's solemn assurances to respect the Constitution, and the Shah's action in arresting Deputies and attacking the Assembly looked to me very like an attempt to abolish that Constitution. I added that I had also heard, with great regret, that the death penalty had been inflicted on two of the prisoners, and I expressed the earnest hope that His Majesty would not order any more such executions.

Later I paid a visit to the Minister for Foreign Affairs, at whose house I found the Secretary. I repeated to his Highness the same language. The Secretary proceeded to Bagh-i-Shah, and brought the following reply from His Majesty: The Shah stated that he had been obliged to take measures to restore order in view of the state of the town. His Majesty explained that the Constitution was suspended, and administrative justice became necessary when a state of siege was declared, but that he had not forgotten his promises, which he would observe; no more executions were to take place, and the prisoners who had already been put to death had had a fair, if summary, trial. The Shah, however, asked me to give him a list of our bastis. I refused, and stated that I had little faith in fairness of the alleged trial of the two persons executed. I repeated that I would do my best to discourage others from coming to take bast, but that, without instructions from His Majesty's Government, I could not undertake to do more.

While the Secretary was absent I pressed Ala-es-Sultaneh that the Shah should, in proof of his sincerity, give his prisoners a public trial, and convoke the Assembly at once. I obtained a promise from his Highness that he would urge this course upon His Majesty, but his Highness intimated, as his personal and confidential opinion, that the Shah would follow no advice but that of the Russian Colonel of Cossacks. The Minister for Foreign Affairs also hinted that it was possible that, in order to prevent people from taking refuge in the Legation, His Majesty might station troops round it. I replied that I could not permit any but peaceful methods to be employed, and I have given Major Stokes instructions to refuse to admit all other refugees until I have received your instructions.

The presence of bastis at our Legation has much annoyed Russian Minister. It shows, he says, that we are not acting in accordance with policy of non-intervention.

He himself received Amir Bahadur Jang, and, during the crisis, even allowed him to rejoin the Shah, but this M. de Hartwig appears to forget.

We are accused by popular party of having abandoned them, and it is the general opinion that the Shah's *coup d'État* has been successfully carried out with Russian support and our unwilling assent.

Cossack guards were posted near Legation gate after I left the town.

[21954] No. 341.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received June 25.)

(No. 156.) P. *Tehran, June 25, 1908.*
(Telegraphic.)

TO prevent people having access to the Legation troops have been placed all round the garden, and even Legation servants find difficulty in coming in and out. I consider this an act of gross discourtesy, and I am protesting against it.

[21848] No. 342.

Sir Edward Grey to Mr. O'Beirne.

(No. 181.) P. *Foreign Office, June 25, 1908.*
(Telegraphic.)

MACEDONIA. With reference to my immediately preceding telegram.

The Russian Ambassador, under instructions from M. Isvolsky, has given me a satisfactory assurance that the latter will lend his support to the interpretation we wish to place in the expression "douzièmes provisoires" and the 17th Article of the Instruction with regard to the selection of officials.

Until the text of the Russian note is received we shall take no further action.

[21954] No. 343.

Sir Edward Grey to Mr. O'Beirne.

(No. 183.) P. *Foreign Office, June 25, 1908.*
(Telegraphic.)

PERSIA.

You should communicate to the Minister for Foreign Affairs substance of Mr. Marling's telegrams Nos. 154 to 156, together with that of my telegram No. 124 sent in reply, and urgently request that Mr. Marling's representations may receive his Excellency's support.

Our Military Attaché was instructed by His Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires to refuse bast, but it was impossible to carry out this instruction with absolute exactitude, and in consequence some bastis are now at the Legation. Instructions are being sent to Mr. Marling to discourage other refugees from following their example, but it is obvious that we cannot give them up without receiving a guarantee, nor can we refuse bast in cases where danger to life is imminent.

His Majesty's Government deeply resent the action of the Shah in placing troops round His Majesty's Legation and thus hindering egress and ingress. This constitutes an act of gross discourtesy.

It is the earnest desire of His Majesty's Government to avoid complications, and they would much regret it if they were forced to take action at the present moment against the Shah with a view of upholding their dignity. This will, however, become inevitable if the troops are not withdrawn immediately.

If you are asked by M. Isvolsky what we mean by exacting reparation, you are authorized to inform his Excellency that you presume it would mean the naval occupation of some port in the south.

You should suggest to his Excellency that we should send instructions in concert to the Representatives of the two Powers to press the Shah to give a fair trial to all persons arrested and to convoke a meeting of the Assembly.

[21954] No. 344.

Sir Edward Grey to Mr. Marling.

(No. 124.) P. *Foreign Office, June 25, 1908.*
(Telegraphic.)

SITUATION in Persia.

Your action and language as reported in your telegrams Nos. 154 and 156 has my entire approval.

Unless you receive a guarantee that a fair trial will be given, or a safe conduct to

the frontier granted, you should refuse to give up those already in bast. And although it may in some cases be impossible to refuse, you are right in discouraging other refugees from coming to the Legation.

The Persian Government should be informed that the action of the Shah in stationing troops round His Majesty's Legation is deeply resented by His Majesty's Government. You should demand that they shall be withdrawn immediately, failing which steps will be at once taken by His Majesty's Government with a view exacting reparation for the indignity offered.

The following is secret:—

I suppose the occupation of a Persian port is the best measure we can resort to. If you concur in this view, please inform me which port you consider most suitable.

[21961] No. 345.

Sir F. Bertie to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received June 26.)

(No. 27.) P. *Paris, June 26, 1908.*
(Telegraphic.)

DR. ISMAIL, a Persian subject, who states that he is known personally to His Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires at Tehran, came to the Embassy this morning and asked that the Foreign Office should instruct Mr. Marling by telegraph to place his family under the protection of His Majesty's Legation.

[21959] No. 346.

Mr. O'Beirne to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received June 26.)

(No. 103.) P. *St. Petersburg, June 26, 1908.*
(Telegraphic.)

YOUR telegram No. 183 of the 25th instant: Persian affairs.

I have received M. Isvolsky's promise that telegraphic instructions will immediately be sent to M. de Hartwig, directing him to support Mr. Marling in his demand that the troops surrounding the Legation shall be withdrawn.

M. Isvolsky says that he will delay giving an immediate answer to your suggestion with regard to the question of summoning the Assembly, in view of the fact that he has received a telegram from M. de Hartwig, saying that the Shah is momentarily expected to issue a Proclamation fixing a date for new elections.

[21956] No. 347.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received June 26.)

(No. 157.) P. *Tehran, June 26, 1908.*
(Telegraphic.)

SITUATION in Tehran.

I am informed very confidentially by the French Minister that one of the persons whom the Shah particularly desires to capture will very shortly take bast with him. President of Assembly, who was not captured, together with another Deputy, is in bast at French Legation. I have admitted no more refugees to His Majesty's Legation. At the Italian Legation the Minister of Finance is in bast together with his family.

Seyyid Abdullah and Seyyid Mahomed, the two chief Mujtehids, are to be deported, but it is not known to what place. Though the town is quiet, general apprehension prevails, and the Cossacks are prosecuting their search for arms and bombs. There are now, it is said, sixty-four prisoners at the Shah's camp. Fighting continues at Tabreez, but the provinces as a whole remain quiet.

Colonel Liakhoff has been made Governor of Tehran and appears to possess very full powers indeed. The Cossacks round the Legation left last night, but owing to Russian Colonel's opposition I had some difficulty in obtaining their removal.

A Proclamation stating that the present Assembly is dissolved has been issued by the Shah. Proclamation announces that new elections will be held in three months and a Senate will be formed. It may be assumed that the Shah will be guided by Russia and will govern absolutely in the meantime.

[21957]

No. 348.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received June 26.)

(No. 158.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Tehran, June 26, 1908.

ZIL-ES-SULTAN. My telegram No. 157 of to-day's date.

The Zil-es-Sultan has applied to me for assistance and protection.

His Imperial Highness, after invoking his recent good service at Shiraz and his long friendship with His Majesty's Legation, begs that I will take steps to insure him in enjoyment of his property and to obtain security for his numerous family and dependents. He is willing to retire to Ispahan or go to Europe, or would remain on at Shiraz if he is supplied with money for purposes of government.

My reply to His Imperial Highness was personally friendly, and I said that I had referred to you his request for protection and help.

It is unquestionable that the Zil's aspirations have been revived by the Shah's unpopularity, and it is certain that he has done something to promote them. Though it is impossible to say how far he went, the action of Jelal-ed-Dowleh here is very compromising, and even more recently that of his other sons at Ispahan. I believe, on the other hand, that the accounts of the Russian Minister are exaggerated. I have no corroboration for one story which he has told me, namely, that the Zil had sent 2,500 rifles for the use of the Enjumens at Tehran. The Shah will in all probability take action against him, and in this he will have Russian support. Should I in that case have your authorization to make representations in his favour—for instance, that he should go to Europe and be allowed to retain his properties?

[22072]

No. 349.

India Office to Foreign Office.—(Received June 27.)

Sir,

India Office, June 24, 1908.

IN reply to your letter, dated the 12th instant, inclosing copy of a despatch from His Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires at Tehran as to Norwegian Consular representation at Bushire, I am directed to say that, though no doubt it is unfortunate that the Norwegian Government should have appointed Messrs. Wöneckhaus' agent as their Consular Representative, Viscount Morley is inclined to question the expediency of retorting by a definite request to the Japanese and Swedish Governments to appoint British subjects as their Consular Representatives at Bushire. He would suggest, for the consideration of the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, that it might be sufficient if an intimation were made to those Governments that, in the event of their desiring at any time to appoint Consular Representatives at Bushire, the selection of British subjects in that capacity would be agreeable to His Majesty's Government in view of their special position in the Persian Gulf.

I am, &c.

(Signed) A. GODLEY.

[22201]

No. 350.

Mr. G. Barclay to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received June 27.)

(No. 154.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Constantinople, June 27, 1908.

ON Wednesday last, as the result of the representations made by the Russian Chargé d'Affaires and myself (see my telegram No. 152 of the 22nd instant), the Council of Ministers presented a long Report to the Sultan regarding the situation. They decided that Tahir Pasha should be instructed to withdraw the Turkish troops to the positions held in February last, and to stop the Kurds raiding, using force if necessary. Tahir Pasha is to be held personally responsible that these orders are carried out. The Council of Ministers denies, however, that any places outside the disputed zone are occupied by Turkish troops.

(Confidential.)

Yesterday, after Selanlik, the Persian Ambassador was received in audience by the Sultan, and in accordance with instructions from his Government made most

energetic representations. On the Sultan's trying to avoid a direct discussion by referring him to the Grand Vizier and the Minister for Foreign Affairs, his Highness replied that his frequent representations at the Porte were entirely fruitless. After his audience he had a conference with the Sultan's First and Second Secretaries at the Sultan's request. He told them that if the Turks did not take steps to ameliorate the state of things on the frontier he would leave Constantinople. Izzet Pasha tried to deny that the Turkish troops had advanced beyond the frontier zone, and promised Prince Mirza Riza Khan that within a day or two he would obtain authentic information on this point.

[22192]

No. 351.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received June 27.)

(No. 159.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Tehran, June 27, 1908.

POLITICAL situation. Your telegram No. 124 of the 24th instant.

This afternoon the Minister for Foreign Affairs came to see me and brought a message from the Shah. His Majesty is ready to grant to all persons in the Legation a full amnesty. He does not wish to try any of them, and though he would be glad if some of them left the country, he will not make it a condition that any of them should do so. In reply, I stipulated that amnesty would require the Shah's signature, and his Excellency, who was very emphatic that pledge would be strictly observed, undertook to furnish it. I added that if unconditional amnesty were granted, I could not undertake responsibility for any of the refugees leaving the country.

The proposal of the Minister for Foreign Affairs appearing to me to fulfil the conditions laid down by you, I agreed to write a note to his Excellency, putting on record the substance of our conversation, and promised to submit his reply to you if it was satisfactory.

Two Proclamations of general amnesty had, so his Highness stated, been issued by the Shah, but on the other hand martial law has been proclaimed in all the towns of Persia. Under it every kind of public meeting is prohibited, under pain of dispersal by force and musketry: the carrying of arms is prohibited, while soldiers are authorized to use their arms to meet any disrespect shown to them. The Russian Colonel who has full powers over all police and military authorities is intrusted with the enforcement of martial law in Tehran.

At the time of my conversation with the Minister for Foreign Affairs, I had not seen this Proclamation, and I am now informing him that it is not improbable that it may affect the views of His Majesty's Government in regard to the bastis, in view of the fact that it obviously affords the easiest of pretexts for violating the amnesty.

It is my opinion that the Shah is confident that under the above Proclamation the Russian Colonel can effectually prevent any attempt at *bast en masse*, such as occurred in 1906, and is consequently making no difficulties about the refugees at present in the Legation.

The situation created by this Proclamation is scarcely distinguishable from intervention by Russia.

[22193]

No. 352.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received June 27.)

(No. 160.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Tehran, June 27, 1908.

POLITICAL situation. My telegram No. 159 of to-day.

I have been asked by Minister for Foreign Affairs what view I took of the Shah's Proclamation. I expressed my personal opinion that, if elections for new Assembly were postponed for three months, His Majesty's Government would not consider that pledges to respect the Constitution given to me by the Shah had been fulfilled.

Ala-es-Sultaneh replied that the Shah had yesterday received a deputation of eighteen Deputies, and some merchants, and that these persons had expressed complete satisfaction with the declarations and assurances of His Majesty. Two Proclamations of amnesty had already been issued by the Shah, and His Majesty had no intention

of executing any more people. Two executions only had taken place, and the two mujtehids were being conveyed with all due respect to Kerbela.

Several applications for admittance to the Legation have been made to-day, and the apprehensions of the Popular party do not appear to have been allayed by the Shah's Proclamations.

[22086]

No. 353.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received June 27.)

(No. 161.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Tehran, June 27, 1908.

GUARDS round His Majesty's Legation. Your telegram No. 124 of the 24th instant.

Minister for Foreign Affairs, on whom I impressed the very serious view taken by His Majesty's Government of the insult offered to His Majesty's Legation by the placing of troops round it, has promised to give an apology in writing. I said that the punishment of the officer responsible might also be required by His Majesty's Government, upon which Minister for Foreign Affairs said that he had received a letter from the Russian Colonel in which he stated that he did not know who the author was.

His Highness added very confidentially that the Shah had no knowledge of the incident, but that Colonel Liakhoff had given the order himself.

[22195]

No. 354.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received June 27.)

(No. 162.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Tehran, June 27, 1908.

FOLLOWING is very confidential:—

M. Passek, who was for more than a year attached to the Russian Legation, has been appointed Russian Consul-General in Tehran with a separate staff and office. During his former stay here Sir C. Spring-Rice considered the influence exercised by him on the Russian Minister to be fatal to any friendly relations between the two Legations, and I concur entirely in this opinion.

[21957]

No. 355.

Sir Edward Grey to Mr. O'Beirne.

(No. 185.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Foreign Office, June 27, 1908.

PERSIAN situation.

M. Isvolsky should be informed that the Zil has appealed to us (see Mr. Marling's telegram No. 158 of the 26th June). You should inform his Excellency that we should like to obtain the co-operation of the Russian Government in any action we may take, and inquire whether a representation to the effect that the Zil should be allowed to leave Persia whilst retaining his properties would receive their support.

You should lay stress on the fact that it is our earnest desire that further complications may be avoided, and that it appears to us that the best means of obtaining this object is the absence of the Zil from Persia. We think that the Russian Government ought to join us in affording the Zil some measure of protection in conjunction with the proposed condition—especially in view of the fact that we lent them our co-operation in their wish to discountenance intrigues against the present Shah.

[22399]

No. 336.

Sir Edward Grey to Mr. O'Beirne.

(No. 186.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Foreign Office, June 27, 1908.

PERSIAN affairs. A statement was made in the House of Commons on the 25th June. This was inevitable, in view of recent events in Tehran. The substance of this

statement has no doubt been telegraphed to that capital, and a certain degree of publicity has thus been given to the action recently taken by the Representatives of Russia and Great Britain.

You should inform Minister for Foreign Affairs that, since there would now be considerable difficulty in following the exact precedent set last Christmas, I agree to send instructions to His Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires to consult with the Russian Minister as to how the joint representations recently made by the two Powers may most effectively be brought to public notice.

[22399]

No. 357.

Sir Edward Grey to Mr. Marling.

(No. 128.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Foreign Office, June 27, 1908.

JOINT representations.

You may take action indicated in my telegram No. 186 of the 27th June to Mr. O'Beirne.

[22200]

No. 358.

Mr. O'Beirne to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received June 28.)

(No. 104.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

St. Petersburg, June 28, 1908.

M. ISVOLSKY informs me that he hears that Persia has been applying to Germany to intervene with the Porte with regard to the Turco-Persian frontier question, and that the German Government are disposed to comply with their request. In consequence of this his Excellency considers it important that the results of our joint representations at Constantinople should be at once made known in Tehran. M. Isvolsky adds that he intends proposing this course to you through Count Benckendorff.

[22196]

No. 359.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received June 28.)

(No. 163.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Tehran, June 28, 1908.

THIS morning there were two parties of fourteen men each patrolling round the Legation, and some ten police were posted to keep a watch on the gates. I have addressed a note in the sense of your telegram No. 124 of the 24th instant to the Minister for Foreign Affairs.

I consider that Bushire is most suitable for occupation, but I feel it my duty to point out that if His Majesty's Government occupied it this course would be considered here as a direct demonstration in favour of the Popular party against the Shah, and a bast in large numbers at His Majesty's Legation might be the result.

[22338]

No. 360.

Mr. O'Beirne to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received June 29.)

(No. 290.)

Sir,

St. Petersburg, June 26, 1908.

I HAVE the honour to transmit to you herewith an official communication which appeared in the "Official Messenger" of to-day, in regard to the situation in Persia.

I have, &c.

(Signed) HUGH O'BEIRNE.

Inclosure in No. 360.

Extract from the "Official Messenger" of June 26, 1908.

THE press is publishing alarming news, and frequently of an exaggerated character, about the state of affairs in Persia. The St. Petersburg Telegraph Agency has received, from an authentic source, the following information respecting the events which have taken place in Tehran during the last few days.

The troubles through which Persia has lately been passing again became more acute during the middle of June. The extreme faction of the Enjumens again urged the Shah to remove the persons who were distasteful to it. The agitation against the Shah assumed wide proportions. The rumours which had been already in circulation, to the effect that the agitation was organized by Zil-es-Sultan, gained currency every day. Having retired to the provinces, in order to divert suspicion from himself, the Zil carried on an energetic agitation among the Enjumens, supplying them liberally with money and arms through agents working under the direction of his eldest son, Jellul-ud-Dowleh, who remained at Tehran. It should be added that both the Ministers and the Medjliss stood aloof, and that from all appearances the latter showed no tendency to yield to the influence of the extreme elements.

The movement met with energetic resistance from the Shah, who at the first opportunity arrested and banished from Tehran the three chief leaders, among them Jellul-ud-Dowleh. Adopting strong measures to repress the movement, the Shah at the same time addressed a manifesto to the Medjliss, declaring that he would remain faithful to the Constitution, which he had sworn to observe in accordance with his solemn declarations to two friendly neighbouring Powers. The manifesto was sympathetically received by the populace. The agitation of the extremists appeared on that occasion to have failed. A strong current of moderate tendency set in at Tehran, and the promoters among them many members of the Medjliss—did their best to find a peaceful issue and to induce the Shah to open negotiations. With that object, it was decided to have recourse to the intervention of the Russian Minister, as was done during the December crisis.

Inspired by a sincere desire to assist in restoring peace in the country and attentively following the course of events in Tehran, the Governments of Russia and England refrained from any interference in Persian internal affairs, although they recognized that their Representatives might have to take some measures if it became absolutely necessary to exercise a checking influence. When the above-mentioned persons addressed their demands to the Russian Minister, the latter, in agreement with the British Representative and in deference to the urgent request of the Persians themselves, assented to their demands in order to assist, as far as possible, in securing a peaceful settlement. Having obtained an audience of the Shah, M. Hartwig transmitted to His Majesty the desire of the above-mentioned Persians. The Shah categorically declared to the Russian Minister that he had no designs against the Constitution; that the agitation against him was only the work of the supporters of the Zil-es-Sultan, who was aiming at the throne; that he had no misunderstandings at all either with the Government or with the Medjliss, and that the measures he had taken were solely directed to maintaining his sovereign rights and to repressing the revolution engineered by Zil-es-Sultan, with the support of the Enjumens. The Shah added that he would gladly conclude an Agreement on the following main lines:—

1. That the inviolability of the monarch and the dynasty should be guaranteed;
2. That the Enjumens should be kept in check;
3. That the respective powers of the legislative and of the executive authorities should be defined; and
4. That the army should be subordinated to the authority of the Shah, according to the laws already elaborated by the Medjliss.

The negotiations which were thereupon opened with the Shah's Plenipotentiaries were at first successful, and hopes were entertained that calm would be restored. However, one of the conditions required by the Shah during the negotiations, namely, the delivery of five leaders of the revolutionary movement who had taken "bast" in the Medjliss, was not fulfilled, and events moved more rapidly. The detachment sent to arrest these five persons was received with bombs and shots from the Assembly House and from the neighbouring mosque, where numerous members of the Enjumens, joined by an armed crowd, were lying in ambush. The guns which were brought up to assist the troops caused some damage to the buildings in which the revolutionaries

were ambushed, including the Zil-es-Sultan's palace; the only house entirely destroyed was that of the Tabreez Enjumens situated near Zil-es-Sultan's palace. It is reported that there were killed and wounded on both sides. A state of siege was declared at Tehran, and the streets were occupied by troops. The Enjumens were dispersed and many of the principal revolutionaries were arrested.

The Representatives of England and Russia, who were in constant communication with one another during these events, and acted in concert, sent their dragomans to the Shah to point out the absolute necessity of taking measures to protect the Europeans living in the town. They were at the same time instructed to advise the Shah in a friendly manner, and in the name of the two Powers, not to abolish the Constitution. The Shah assured the Representatives that all his activity was directed solely against the revolutionaries and conspirators, that he was firmly determined to maintain the Medjliss, and that every precaution had been taken to protect foreigners. The following night there were no disturbances. The composition of the Cabinet remains as before. The latest news indicate that the Shah's position has been strengthened.

[22440]

No. 361.

Admiralty to Foreign Office.—(Received June 29.)

(Confidential.)

Sir,

Admiralty, June 29, 1908.

WITH reference to your letter of the 27th instant, I am commanded by my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty to transmit, for the information of the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, copy of a telegram, dated the 27th instant, which was sent in cypher to the Commander-in-chief, East Indies, respecting the state of affairs in Persia.

I am, &c.
(Signed) C. I. THOMAS.

Inclosure in No. 361.

Admiralty to Commodore Sir G. Warrender.

(Telegraphic.) P.

Admiralty, June 27, 1908.

SITUATION at Tehran.

The necessity may arise, in view of state of affairs in Persia, of sending ships to occupy temporarily some port in the south of that country. You should hold yourself in readiness to take action if ordered.

[22197]

No. 362.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received June 29.)

(No. 164.)

Tehran, June 28, 1908.

(Telegraphic.) P.

I HAVE had a very frank conversation with the Russian Minister. His Excellency expressed to me his conviction that certain members of this Legation are not acting in accordance with our avowed policy. He states that the Military Attaché allowed bastis to enter for political reasons; that Mr. Churchill invited a Deputy, by letter, to take bast in the Legation; that Abbas Kuli Khan had made speeches in Anjumans; and that my gholams invited people to take refuge with us, one gholam having even fetched four Persians to the Legation.

In reply to these statements I told M. de Hartwig that I was convinced that there was no truth in any of these allegations, and pinned him down to the letter which he asserted Mr. Churchill had written; he then said it was not a letter, but a message. I pointed out that the story was palpably improbable, as to judge from a conversation which I had had with the Deputy in question; he was a reactionary.

I said that I had heard many stories about his Excellency and other Russians, as, for instance, that Colonel Liakhoff intended to bombard His Majesty's Legation, but that I did not believe them, and I begged that he would not believe those about us.

M. de Hartwig then said that a large proportion of the bastis in the Legation now had no reason to fear for their lives, and he pressed me very hard to expel them. He said that though there were two or three whose lives might have been in danger, the others had never been menaced, and that the Military Attaché, whose attitude as an officer of the Indian army was notorious, had admitted them for political reasons, and that their continued presence in the Legation afforded a rallying point for revolutionaries. In reply, I said that the most I could admit was that the Military Attaché had in one or two cases made an error of judgment, but that he had been in no way influenced by political reasons. The bastis had been admitted because they were in fear of their lives, and there was no doubt as to the genuineness of their terror, though possibly their fears were groundless. It was my opinion that a good many had really no cause for alarm, but I thought that, however unreasonable their fears might be, they would, in view of the late Proclamation, be afraid to leave, and I did not anticipate that His Majesty's Government would authorize me to force them to go against their will. Upon my saying that I would ask you for instructions, Russian Minister replied that the manner in which I framed my request would decide the nature of the reply! M. de Hartwig urged that it was absurd to take the fears of the bastis into consideration in view of the amnesty which the Shah had recently proclaimed, and that I could perfectly well, without reference to you, turn away all the refugees with one or two exceptions.

In reply to M. de Hartwig's statement that our instructions clearly directed us to maintain the Shah on the throne, I said that some stress was laid on non-intervention in my instructions.

With regard to the posting of Cossacks round His Majesty's Legation, I pointed out that the presence of a few bastis in the Legation was far less likely to produce a doubt as to the reality of our accord than such a measure taken by the orders of the Russian Colonel. M. de Hartwig denied this, and seemed more than half inclined to justify the measure, as he knew that other bastis had been admitted, in spite of the assurances given by me on Wednesday that I would do my utmost to prevent any more from coming in. I said that this was not true, and that Major Stokes had received several applications to admit large bodies of men and had refused.

It has since come to my knowledge that five more got into the Legation last night, and decline to go out again. I have now given instructions that no one be admitted except when in visible and imminent danger, and that all gates be closed.

[22198]

No. 363.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received June 29.)

(No. 165. Very Confidential.)
(Telegraphic.) P.

Tehran, June 28, 1908.

GUARDS round the Legation.

My immediately preceding telegram.

Cossacks "practically besieged" the Legation this afternoon, and to observe what was taking place in the garden some even climbed the surrounding trees.

Mr. Churchill at once went to the Shah to inform him of the substance of your telegram No. 124, and to state that the action taken by the Legation was purely humanitarian in the question of admitting refugees.

The Private Secretary of the Minister for Foreign Affairs came in the meanwhile to see me. I told him plainly that if these insults were continued I was convinced that His Majesty's Government would occupy a Persian port. The Secretary had no excuse to offer.

Colonel Liakhoff, who is also Governor-General of the town, is the responsible official. It is possible that the desired effect might be produced by a hint at St. Petersburg that we may have to demand his dismissal.

Though I still maintain friendly personal relations with M. de Hartwig, common action with the Russian Legation is only possible when it suits their policy, and it will be impossible to keep up the appearance of accord much longer in view of the repeated insults placed on His Majesty's Legation by the Russian Colonel. Reasonable discussion with M. de Hartwig is almost impossible as it is.

M. Lecomte has telegraphed to his Government giving his view of the situation, which he sees in the same light as I do.

[22199]

No. 364.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received June 29.)

(No. 166. Very Confidential.)
(Telegraphic.) P.

Tehran, June 28, 1908.

GUARDS round Legation.

My immediately preceding telegram.

Neither the Russian Minister nor the Russian Governor-General of Tehran believes in the good faith of this Legation, and the situation is becoming intolerable. Moreover, we are humiliated in the eyes of Persians and foreigners by the action of Colonel Liakhoff in surrounding the Legation with Cossacks.

It is impossible to convince either M. de Hartwig or Colonel Liakhoff that I am not trying to attract refugees. As previously reported, five more bastis came in yesterday, and as they might have been arrested by Cossacks, it was not possible to induce them to leave. Two or three persons who have been refused admittance have been arrested, and the clock-keeper of the Legation, as he was leaving the main gate, was arrested this afternoon.

I venture to submit that in these circumstances men who decline to leave cannot be turned out of the Legation by force.

No reliance is placed on the Shah's declarations of general amnesty, and the alarm of the people is only increased by the violent and reckless action of Colonel Liakhoff, and the desire of the people to take bast is consequently the greater.

M. de Hartwig asserts that a reaction in favour of the Shah is the reason of the quiet condition of the town, but this is partly fallacious. In my opinion, sheer terror is the cause of both the calm and apparent reaction, and the people will not be reassured until conciliatory measures are taken.

According to Major Stokes, who is in town, it is not impossible that a dash may be made for the Legation by a mass of people in desperation. In that case it would be impossible to refuse admission, more especially if the Cossacks tired or even threatened to fire on the people.

[22341]

No. 365.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received June 29.)

(No. 167.)
(Telegraphic.) P.

Tehran, June 29, 1908.

PROVINCIAL situation.

Acting Consul-General at Ispahan reports that people are threatening to take bast with him.

Following is Secret:—

A telegram has been sent to Kerbela by the two great Mujtehids urging that an order for the appointment of a Regent such as Zil-es-Sultan be issued to all the towns of Persia.

Fighting has been going on for some days continuously at Tabreez, and threats are being made that people will take refuge in our Consulate-General. At the Russian Consulate-General six members of the Constitutional party are already in bast.

[22408]

No. 366.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received June 29.)

(No. 168.)
(Telegraphic.) P.

Tehran, June 29, 1908.

THE joint representations made by our dragomans are, I presume, those which are referred to in the last line of your telegram No. 127.

Not having heard from Mr. O'Beirne whether the Russian Government agreed to the publication of the communications to be made to the Shah and Zil-es-Sultan, outlined in your telegram No. 172 to St. Petersburg, and, in view of the then temper

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of Russian Minister, I thought it useless to do more than give his Excellency a hint that joint action, as above indicated, had been proposed by His Majesty's Government. As I had anticipated, M. de Hartwig ignored my remarks.

[22409]

No. 367.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received June 29.)

(No. 169.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Tehran, June 29, 1908.

IT is practically impossible to prevent people coming to take refuge in the village of Gulahek. A few have already come, and more may follow. I presume that our protection may be extended to them.

[22463]

No. 368.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received June 29.)

(No. 170.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Tehran, June 29, 1908.

GUARDS round His Majesty's Legation. My telegram No. 165 of the 28th instant.

The Shah was inclined to be obstinate when Mr. Churchill saw him, and would give no definite promise. However, Ala-es-Sultaneh, who was present at the audience, said that the Cossacks would be withdrawn from around the Legation.

No Cossacks were visible early this morning, but there were eight armed gendarmes patrolling, and by 10 o'clock six Cossacks had reappeared, and the number of gendarmes had been increased. Another person coming to the Legation this morning was arrested.

I consider that further forbearance in this matter would be misplaced, and unless His Majesty's Government take the step contemplated in your telegram No. 124, or I receive your authorization to inform Persian Government that His Majesty's Government will occupy Bushire, this sort of thing will continue.

Colonel Liakhoff is undoubtedly the real offender, and I venture to submit that a demand for his dismissal would be justified.

[22454]

No. 369.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received June 29.)

(No. 171.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Tehran, June 29, 1908.

I HAVE heard from a secret source that a Russian subject has been killed at Tabreez in the course of the fighting there, and it is reported that a request for troops has been made by the Russian Consul-General.

[22199]

No. 370.

Sir Edward Grey to Mr. O'Beirne.

(No. 190.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Foreign Office, June 29, 1908.

MR MARLING'S telegrams Nos. 164 and 166. You should inform M. Isvolsky of their substance, and state that His Majesty's Government have received these reports with the profoundest concern.

They had hoped that M. Isvolsky would have responded to the frank explanations given by them and to their appeal for his assistance in obtaining the removal of the Cossack cordon from His Majesty's Legation.

The repeated indignities placed on His Majesty's Legation by the Russian Colonel of Cossacks are creating a situation which is becoming intolerable, while his violent action is only increasing general alarm and the desire of the people to seek refuge.

It is difficult for His Majesty's Government to believe that instructions sent to the Russian Minister would be disregarded by the Russian Colonel, but unless steps are taken at once to restrain his action towards His Majesty's Legation, a very serious

situation will undoubtedly arise, and it will become necessary to vindicate the honour of the flag by naval measures in the Gulf. His Majesty's Government would be most reluctant to take such action, which could only be regarded as disagreement between the two Powers, and might even be hailed by the Popular party as a demonstration in their favour.

I desire that you will repeat to M. Isvolsky the assurance which I have already given that His Majesty's Government have been actuated throughout by the determination not to intervene, nor to seek any political advantage from the use of the custom of "bast" or otherwise; and they are convinced that His Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires and the Legation staff have carried out their policy with perfect loyalty. On the other hand, a friendly and considerate attitude on the part of Russian Agents in Tehran towards His Majesty's Legation is indispensable to further the friendly relations now existing between the two Governments.

I am repeating to you a message from the Shah to the King, and the instructions to Mr. Marling as to the reply. It is clear that either the Shah is manufacturing a case against our Legation, and distorting its action in order to prejudice the Russians against us, or else that the Russian Minister or officers at Tehran have misrepresented the British Legation to the Shah in order to make mischief. In either event the attitude of the Shah is such that, if it continues, we shall be compelled to take action in the South of Persia to vindicate ourselves against him.

Orders have already been given by Mr. Marling to close the gates of the Legation. I have approved his action, and instructed him not to admit any persons to "bast" unless they are in visible and imminent danger of life.

[22562]

No. 371.

Sir Edward Grey to Mr. O'Beirne.

(No. 191.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Foreign Office, June 29, 1908.

STRAINED relations between British and Russian Legations at Tehran.

The substance of Mr. Marling's telegrams on this subject has been communicated to the Russian Ambassador here. I have told his Excellency that I consider the best course would be for the two Governments to act together in policy of non-intervention. A proof that we should not exploit this policy for our own advantage was afforded by our willingness that the Zil-es-Sultan should be expatriated.

If the Russian Government, however, consider it necessary that they should give their support to the present Shah, they will assume responsibility for his policy, and it will be incumbent on them to see that no action is taken either by His Majesty or any of his officers which is in any way inimical to the spirit of the Anglo-Russian Convention or hostile to ourselves.

On the other hand, we should, if there were a continuance of the present state of affairs, be obliged to take action in the south of Persia in order to exact reparation and vindicate our position. In my opinion, the responsibility for recent events appeared to rest on the Russian Colonel, who seemed to be acting as if there was no Convention between Great Britain and Russia, and I was now engaged in considering what measures could be adopted by us.

I informed Count Benckendorff that the situation appeared to me to be a very serious one, for although any claim made or any steps taken by us would be directed against the Shah, yet if a despotic Government were going to be carried on for three months by His Majesty, during which period Tehran would have a Russian Colonel as Governor-General, and if we were obliged to take action, a disagreement between the two Powers must become apparent.

[22200]

No. 372.

Sir Edward Grey to Mr. O'Beirne.

(No. 192.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Foreign Office, June 29, 1908.

TURCO-PERSIAN frontier.

I agree to the proposal made by the Minister for Foreign Affairs, and instructions will be sent immediately to Mr. Marling, as suggested in your telegram No. 104 of the 28th instant.

[22408]

No. 373.

Sir Edward Grey to Mr. O'Beirne.

(No. 195.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Foreign Office, June 29, 1908.

JOINT representations.

With reference to my telegram No. 186 of the 27th instant. Is this suggestion assented to by the Russian Government; and, if they have assented, have instructions in accordance therewith been sent to their Representative at Tehran? (See Mr. Marling's telegram No. 168 of to-day's date.)

[22192]

No. 374.

Sir Edward Grey to Mr. Marling.

(No. 129.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Foreign Office, June 29, 1908.

WITH reference to your telegrams Nos. 159 and 160 of the 27th instant, respecting the general situation in Persia.

I authorize you to accept a guarantee signed by the Shah for the security and lives of those now in "bast" at the Legation. A warning should be given at the same time that, if the pledge be not observed with the greatest strictness, the consequences will be of the most serious nature.

It does not necessarily follow that a proclamation of martial law is inconsistent with a complete amnesty.

[22200]

No. 375.

Sir Edward Grey to Mr. Marling.

(No. 132.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Foreign Office, June 29, 1908.

WITH reference to Mr. O'Beirne's telegram No. 104 of the 28th instant, and to Mr. Barclay's telegram No. 154 of the 27th instant, on the subject of the Turco-Persian frontier.

You should take joint action with the Russian Minister in the sense suggested.

[22409]

No. 376.

Sir Edward Grey to Mr. Marling.

(No. 133.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Foreign Office, June 29, 1908.

REFUGEES at Gulahek.

With reference to your telegram No. 169 of the 29th instant. You should regard in the same light as ordinary villagers persons other than criminals taking refuge in village.

[21937]

No. 377.

Sir Edward Grey to Mr. Marling.

(No. 134.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Foreign Office, June 29, 1908.

WITH reference to your telegram No. 135 of the 5th instant: Concession for red oxide at Sirri.

We are precluded from insisting that application for Concession should be made to Sheikh of Shargah by statement in note addressed to the Persian Government by Sir A. Hardinge (see his despatch No. 104 of the 15th June, 1904) that, until controversy as to ownership is settled, we have not insisted that their flag should be removed from the island. On the other hand, we are thereby enabled to prohibit the Persian Government from granting the Concession to any applicant not of British nationality without our consent.

Guarantee of nature suggested by Consul-General at Bushire in your telegram No. 102 of the 16th April, has been requested from the Manchester firm who are interested. Should there, in your opinion, be any danger that the Concession may be granted to a foreigner, Messrs. Hajji Ali Akbar and Co., Limited, should be asked to give the undertaking required, and the Persian Government should be informed that the result of this action would be the assertion of the Jowasmi claim.

[22408]

No. 378.

Sir Edward Grey to Mr. Marling.

(No. 136.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Foreign Office, June 29, 1908.

JOINT representations.

The answer to the inquiry contained in the first paragraph of your telegram No. 168 of the 29th instant is in the affirmative.

[22463]

No. 379.

Sir Edward Grey to Mr. Marling.

(No. 137.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Foreign Office, June 29, 1908.

PERSIAN situation.

The great difficulty of your position is fully appreciated by me, but I should like, before informing the Persian Government that we shall occupy Bushire, to await the effect of the message sent to the Shah by the King, and also the reply of the Russian Government to my communication, indicated in my telegram No. 191 to Mr. O'Beirne.

The India Office and the Admiralty are being consulted, as we require more certain knowledge as to what immediate steps it is practicable to take at the present moment.

[22465]

No. 380.

Sir Edward Grey to Mr. Marling.

(No. 138.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Foreign Office, June 29, 1908.

FOLLOWING telegram received by the King from the Shah, dated the 26th instant:—

"I have recently taken steps to punish some mischief-makers who, at the instigation of the Zil-es-Sultan, wished to deprive me of my rightful and hereditary throne. I had no objection whatever to the arrangement which I myself had made, but, on the other hand, mischief-makers had brought about such a confusion in the country that the Government and the Deputies of the Medjliss-e-Shora (National Council) could do nothing. I therefore took steps to apprehend and punish the mischief-makers. I now deeply regret that at such a juncture your Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires (prompted by Mr. Churchill and Major Stokes, Military Attaché) has sent his own gholams, who are members of the evildoing Anjumens (Societies), and has invited the mischief-makers to the Legation. This is a clear interference with the internal affairs of Persia. There is no doubt that if in place of this Chargé d'Affaires there was a tactful and judicious Minister in Tehran—like the other Ministers—he would have closed the gates of your Majesty's Legation, like the other Legations in Tehran, and would not have received them. Under these circumstances, unofficially (in a friendly manner) I ask your Majesty—my good and exalted Brother—to put a stop to these improper acts of the Chargé d'Affaires; send an accomplished Minister, who would be able to restrain the members of the Legation, so that your Majesty's respected Legation may not appear in the eyes of the public as an asylum for malignant and mischievous persons. I shall be most grateful for your Majesty's favourable reply."

[22465]

No. 381.

Sir Edward Grey to Mr. Marling.

(No. 139.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Foreign Office, June 29, 1908.

PLEASE communicate to Shah Persian translation of following telegram from the King to His Majesty, and give a copy to Minister for Foreign Affairs:—

"I have received your Majesty's telegram of 26th instant. I have no interest nor desire to intervene in any way in the internal affairs of your country, which I hope you will govern as a constitutional Sovereign with justice and humanity. Nobody has been invited to take refuge in my Legation at Tehran, and although certain of your subjects have sought refuge there in fear of their lives, your Majesty is well aware that it is not the custom of your country to refuse asylum to refugees who are not guilty of crime. Those that are already in my Legation will leave on satisfactory guarantees being given. The statement in your Majesty's telegram that my Chargé d'Affaires has invited mischief-makers to the Legation is the direct contrary of the truth, for he has done everything consistent with the recognized customs of Persia to discourage all persons from taking refuge there. The conduct of your troops in surrounding my Legation and arresting those who come out of it is an indignity which cannot be tolerated, and unless steps are immediately taken to put an end to this situation, I and my Government will be reluctantly compelled to take measures to vindicate the honour of my flag.

"I have every confidence in the prudence and good faith of my Chargé d'Affaires at Tehran. It is unfortunate that for more than two years there has been no Persian Minister in London with whom my Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs can discuss matters affecting the relations of the two countries, although I accepted in October 1906 the appointment by your Majesty of a new Persian Minister, who, I understand, is still in Berlin."

[22199]

No. 382.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir F. Bertie.

(No. 285.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, June 29, 1908.

I TRANSMIT to your Excellency herewith copies of telegraphic correspondence with His Majesty's Chargés d'Affaires at Tehran and St. Petersburg,* relative to the situation which has arisen in that capital in consequence of the attitude adopted by the Russian Minister and the action of the Russian Commander of the Cossack guard.

Your Excellency will observe that the French Minister's views on this subject coincide with those of Mr. Marling, and that he has reported in this sense to his Government.

I have to request you to explain, without delay, to the French Minister for Foreign Affairs the position of affairs in Persia, as set forth in these telegrams, and the serious international consequences which may result from it, and to request his Excellency to be good enough to send immediate instructions to the French Ambassador at St. Petersburg to support the representations which His Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires will make to the Russian Government on the subject.

I am, &c.

(Signed) E. GREY.

[22598]

No. 383.

Mr. G. Barclay to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received June 30.)

(No. 155.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Constantinople, June 30, 1908.

I HAVE received to-day an unnumbered telegram from Mr. Wratishaw, dated the 23rd instant, reporting that the Turkish authorities are apparently disposed to prevent further attacks by the Kurds, and that the situation in the Urumia district had improved.

* Nos. 328, 329, 338, 343, 344, 346, 353, 355, 356, 357, 358, 359, 360, 363, 364, 366, 370, and 374.

[22595]

No. 384.

Mr. O'Beirne to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received June 30.)

(No. 105.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

St. Petersburg, June 30, 1908.

YOUR telegram No. 190 of the 27th June. Affairs of Persia.

I am unable to see M. Isvolsky till this evening, owing to his Excellency's absence in Peterhof, but I have in the meanwhile been shown a telegram received this morning at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs from Russian Minister at Tehran, which is marked "Secret." M. de Hartwig says that he has spoken privately to the Shah and to the Russian Colonel on the subject of the withdrawal of troops from round the Legation, and that he has also given official support to Mr. Marling's request for such withdrawal. He adds that, with the exception of one picket, such as is usually kept for the protection of foreign Missions in their own interest, all the Cossacks have now been withdrawn. In conclusion he says that Mr. Marling is satisfied with the steps taken.

[22596]

No. 385.

Mr. O'Beirne to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received June 30.)

(No. 106.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

St. Petersburg, June 30, 1908.

PERSIAN affairs. Your telegram No. 186 of the 27th instant.

M. de Hartwig has been instructed to concert with Mr. Marling as to best method of giving the desired publicity to the joint communication made to the Shah by the two Representatives.

[22464]

No. 386.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received June 30.)

(No. 172.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Tehran, June 29, 1908.

TROOPS round His Majesty's Legation.

The Persian Government have sent an unsatisfactory reply to my representation, containing no word of apology.

A letter from Colonel Liakhoff is inclosed, in which the arrangement of the patrols of Cossacks is laid down. From this statement it is clear that these patrols have been stationed so that a constant and effective watch may be exercised over the Legation, while notice of any one entering or leaving the Legation is given by the police, who are posted under the garden walls; in fact, though somewhat less ostentatious than it was previously, the investment is as effective as before.

I received the St. Petersburg telegram No. 103 only yesterday, and in view of the tone which the Russian Minister adopted at my last interview with him, the manner in which he has spoken of this Legation to M. Lecomte, and that he is quite aware of the position of affairs, I do not propose to ask him to co-operate with me. I venture to submit also that His Majesty's Government can, and should, exact respect without having recourse to external aid in such a matter.

[22576]

No. 387.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received June 30.)

(No. 173.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Tehran, June 30, 1908.

TROOPS round Legation. My immediately preceding telegram.

Minister for Foreign Affairs sent me a telegram late last night in which, by command of the Shah, he expressed deep regret at recent incidents, and stated that stringent orders had been given in the proper quarters. Occurrences were due, he said, to a misunderstanding on the part of over-zealous officials.

In my official reply I said that I would submit his explanation to my Government, but in a private note I warned his Highness that I doubted whether His Majesty's Government would deem a mere apology sufficient reparation for the indignities so publicly offered to His Majesty's Legation.

His Majesty's Legation has been for five days practically under taboo, enforced by Asiatics under Russian orders, and I very earnestly hope that His Majesty's Government will not accept this apology. Cossacks have within a few yards of the gates of the Legation stopped British subjects, the Indian sowar and a gholam, both in uniform, in charge of the Foreign Office bags, and uniformed servants of the Legation. Rifles have been pointed at the carriage of the native Oriental Secretary while he was accompanied by a servant in uniform. One person already under arrest has even been fired on, and perfectly innocent persons seized within a few feet of the gates.

His Majesty's Legation has, in fact, been treated by the Cossacks with as scant respect as has been shown to natives under the Martial Law Proclamation.

The Persian Government have disregarded the strongest protests on my part, and they have broken the most positive assurances.

Should you desire to have independent evidence of the present attitude of the Russians towards this Legation and towards Persia, I venture to suggest that the French Government be asked to communicate confidentially to His Majesty's Government the substance of a telegram, dated yesterday, sent by the French Minister, in which he gives his appreciation of the present situation.

[22568] No. 388.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received June 30.)

(No. 174.) *Tehran, June 30, 1908.*
(Telegraphic.) P.

SITUATION in the provinces. My telegram No. 167 of yesterday.
In a telegram delayed two days in transmission, Vice-Consul reports that a somewhat serious disturbance took place on the 27th instant at Resht.

[22594] No. 389.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received June 30.)

(No. 175.) *Tehran, June 30, 1908.*
(Telegraphic.) P.

TROOPS round Legation. My telegram No. 173 of to-day.
The police remain, but the patrols of Cossacks disappeared this morning.

[22576] No. 390.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir F. Bertie.

(No. 78.) *Foreign Office, June 30, 1908.*
(Telegraphic.) P.

WITH reference to Mr. Marling's telegram No. 173 of this day's date.
Please request the French Government, in view of the situation in Tehran, to act as proposed in final paragraph of above telegram.

[21961] No. 391.

Sir Edward Grey to Mr. Marling.

(No. 141.) *Foreign Office, June 30, 1908.*
(Telegraphic.) P.

IF you see no objection, and if you consider that Dr. Ismail's family are in danger, you may do what you properly can unofficially to protect them.
(See telegram No. 27 from Paris of the 26th instant.)

[22576]

No. 392.

Sir Edward Grey to Mr. Marling.

(No. 142.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Foreign Office, June 30, 1908.

SITUATION at Legation.

With reference to your telegram No. 173 of the 30th June.

The Minister for Foreign Affairs should be informed that the apology which he has offered will by no means suffice to meet the very grave situation which the repeated insults put upon His Majesty's Legation have created. Our demands are in the process of formulation, and we will communicate them to you as soon as possible.

I presume that the police and troops have now been removed from the vicinity of the Legation.

[22678]

No. 393.

Sir Edward Grey to Mr. Marling.

(No. 143.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Foreign Office, June 30, 1908.

BASTIS.

Please furnish description and numbers of those now at our Legation.